اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۙ

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 16 Al-Nahl (The Bee)

سُوْرَةُ النَّحْلِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

اَتٰۤى اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْهُ ؕ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝١

(16-1) Allah's "Judgment" has come: [1] so do not clamor for hastening it; He is free from every defect, and exalted high above the shirk that they are practicing. [2]

(1) That is, the time for final judgment has come near. As regards to the use of the past tense in the original, this may be to show certainty of its occurrence in the near future or to emphasize the fact that the rebellion and the wrong deeds of the Quraish had become so unbearable that they warranted that the time for decisive action had come.

Here question arises as to what that judgment was and how it came. We are of the opinion (and true knowledge is with Allah alone) that that judgment was hijra (the migration) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Makkah. For a short time after this revelation, he was bidden to emigrate from there. And according to the Quran, a Prophet (peace be upon him) is bidden to leave his place only at that time when the rebellion and antagonism of his people reaches the extreme limit. Then their doom is sealed, for after this Allah's punishment comes on them either as a direct scourge from Him, or they are destroyed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers. And this did actually take place. At the occasion of the migration, the people of Makkah regarded it as a victory for themselves, but in fact it turned out to be a defeat for shirk and disbelief which were totally uprooted within a decade or so after the migration, not only from Makkah but from the rest of Arabia as well.

(2) In order to understand the interconnection between the first and the second sentences, one should keep in view the

background. The challenge of the disbelievers to the Prophet (peace be upon him), to hasten divine judgment, was really based on their assumption that their own religion of shirk was true and the religion of Tauhid presented by Muhammad (peace be upon him) was false. Otherwise, they argued, the divine scourge with which he threatened them would have come upon them long before because of their disbelief and rebellion, if there had been the authority of Allah behind it. That is why after the declaration of the judgment, their misunderstanding about the cause of delay in the punishment was removed, as if to say: You are absolutely wrong to assume that punishment has not been inflicted on you because your creed of shirk is true, for Allah is free from and far above shirk and has no partner.

يُنَزِّلُ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةَ بِالرُّوۡحِ مِنۡ اَمۡرِهٖ عَلٰى مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ مِنۡ عِبَادِهٖۤ اَنۡ اَنۡذِرُوۡۤا اَنَّهٗ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّاۤ اَنَا فَاتَّقُوۡنِ ۲

(16-2) He sends down this spirit(of prophecy) by His command through His angels [3] on any of His servants whom He wills, [4] (directing them): "Warn people that there is no deity but Me; so hold Me alone in fear." [5]

(3) This means the Spirit of Prophethood with which a Prophet is imbued in order to fulfill his mission by word and deed. The Quran has called this the Spirit in several places, for this has the same relation to the mission of a Prophet and his moral life, which the soul has to the physical human life.

(4) As one of the things, which prompted the disbelievers to challenge the Prophet (peace be upon him) for scourge, was their presumption that he was not a true Prophet. Allah told them categorically that he was a true Prophet who had been imbued with the Spirit which We had sent down on him.

“Spirit of His command, upon whom He wills.” This is the answer to the objections which the chiefs of the Quraish used to raise against the Prophet (peace be upon him): Had Allah wanted to send a Messenger to them, was there no one better than Muhammad (peace be upon him), son of Abdullah, for this

mission. Why did He not choose one of the big chiefs of Makkah or Taif for the purpose? Such absurd objections needed no other answer than this that is why such an answer has been given in several places of the Quran as if to say: Allah knows best how to do His work, and does not stand in need of any advice from you. He chooses for His mission anyone whom He considers fit for it.

(5) This verse declares the essence of the Spirit of Prophethood, which is this: Godhead belongs to one Allah alone, so only He is worthy of fear. Therefore, there is no other anchor that might make fast and hold together human moral system than His fear. For it is the fear of His displeasure and His punishment, and the fear of the consequences of His disobedience which alone can act as a strong deterrent to restrain one from deviation. That is why mankind has been admonished: Fear Me.

خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ ا لۡاَ رۡضَ بِا لۡحَقِّ ؕ تَعٰلٰی عَمَّا یُشۡرِکُوۡ ۳ؕ

(16-3) He created the heavens and the earth with Truth. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Allah in His Divinity. (6)

(6) That is to say, the entire system of the earth and the heavens is a witness to the truth of the doctrine of Tauhid and to the negation of shirk. You may look at anything in the universe and consider the system from any point of view you like, you will find proof of this fact that it is being run by one God and not by many gods. Then how is it that you believe in shirk when there is no proof whatsoever of this in the universe As a fitting sequence of this, proofs of Tauhid and refutation of shirk have been given from man himself and from other signs in the universe, and it has also been shown that Prophethood is based on truth.

خَلَقَ ا لۡاِ نۡسَانَ مِنۡ نُّطۡفَۃٍ فَاِذَا ہُوَ خَصِیۡمٌ مُّبِیۡنٌ ۴ؕ

(16-4) He created man out of a mere drop of fluid, and lo! he turned into an open wrangler. (7)

(7) This has two meanings and both are meant here.

(1) Though Allah created man from an insignificant spermdrop, he is capable of arguing and giving reasons in support of his claim.

(2) Man who has such an insignificant origin, has become so vain that he does not hesitate to dispute even with his Creator.

If considered in its first sense, it is a chain in the series of arguments given in many succeeding verses to prove the truth of the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Please refer to (E.N. 15). If taken in the second sense, it is meant to warn man that he should not forget the insignificant origin of his existence while engaged in his rebellious arguments against his Creator. If he remembered the different stages of his humiliating birth and growth, he would consider many times before he assumed a haughty and rebellious attitude towards his Creator.

وَ الۡاَنۡعَامَ خَلَقَہَا ۚ لَکُمۡ فِیۡہَا دِفۡءٌ وَّ مَنَافِعُ وَ مِنۡہَا تَاۡکُلُوۡنَ ۝۵

(16-5) He created the cattle. They are a source of clothing and food and also a variety of other benefits for you.

وَ لَکُمۡ فِیۡہَا جَمَالٌ حِیۡنَ تُرِیۡحُوۡنَ وَ حِیۡنَ تَسۡرَحُوۡنَ ۝۶

(16-6) And you find beauty in them as you drive them to pasture in the morning and as you drive them back home in the evening;

وَ تَحۡمِلُ اَثۡقَالَکُمۡ اِلٰی بَلَدٍ لَّمۡ تَکُوۡنُوۡا بٰلِغِیۡہِ اِلَّا بِشِقِّ الۡاَنۡفُسِ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّکُمۡ لَرَءُوۡفٌ رَّحِیۡمٌ ۝۷

(16-7) and they carry your loads to many a place which you would be unable to reach without much hardship. Surely your Lord is Intensely Loving, Most Merciful.

وَّ الۡخَیۡلَ وَ الۡبِغَالَ وَ الۡحَمِیۡرَ لِتَرۡکَبُوۡہَا وَ زِیۡنَۃً ؕ وَ یَخۡلُقُ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۝۸

(16-8) And He created horses and mules and asses for you to ride, and also for your adornment. And He creates many things (for you) that you do not even know about. [8]

(8) That is, there are many agencies which are working for the good of man but he is quite unaware of such servants and the services rendered by them.

وَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ قَصۡدُ السَّبِيۡلِ وَ مِنۡهَا جَآئِرٌ ؕ وَ لَوۡ شَآءَ لَهَدٰىكُمۡ اَجۡمَعِيۡنَ ﴿۱۶:۱۰﴾

(16-9) It rests with Allah alone to show you the Right Way, even when there are many crooked ways. [9] Had He so willed, He would have (perforce) guided you all aright. [10]

(9) This contains an argument for Prophethood along with a proof of Tauhid and of Allah's compassion and providence. The argument is this:

There are many divergent ways of thought and action open for man to choose from. Obviously all these divergent ways cannot be straight ways, because there can be only one straight way; therefore, there can be only one right theory of life which is based on that way, and only one right way of life which is based on that right theory. Thus it is clear that the choice of the right way of life is man's most important and basic need, for its wrong choice would inevitably lead to his ruin. This is because all other things fulfill his animal needs only, but this is the greatest necessity of his life as a human being and without its fulfillment his life would be an utter failure.

Now, it cannot be expected that Allah Who made so many provisions, and on such a large scale, for the fulfillment of the animal life of man, did not make any arrangement for the fulfillment of this real and greatest necessity of man. Just as He has provided for all the necessities of his life, so He has also provided for this greatest need of his through Prophethood. If Prophethood is denied then it should be pointed out in what way Allah has fulfilled this basic need of man. Experience of centuries has shown that mankind has always blundered whenever it has

chosen a way of life by itself. This is because man's wisdom and intelligence are limited, and he cannot depend on these for the choice of the right way of life. Above all, one cannot say that Allah has made no arrangement for this basic need of man, for this will be the greatest misconception of Allah that He may make most elaborate arrangements for man's animal life but should leave him in the lurch to search out a way for himself for the fulfillment of this most important and basic need.

(10) Here a question arises: Why didn't Allah will to guide all the people aright inherently when He had taken upon Himself to show the right way? It is true that Allah could have imbued man, like other creatures, with the inborn instinct and enabled him to choose the right way without conscious thought, experience or teaching. But this would have been against His will which was to create a being, having will and power and freedom to follow the right way or the wrong way, whichever he chose for himself. This is why he has been endowed with different means of knowledge and power of conscious thought, deliberation and will, and has been empowered with the authority to make use of all powers in him and all things around him. Moreover, He has placed in him and all around him such factors as might lead him to guidance or deviation. All these things would have become meaningless, had he been created righteous by birth, and he could never have attained the heights of progress, which can be achieved only by the right use of freedom. That is why Allah has chosen Prophethood for man's guidance, and left him free to follow or reject a Prophet. This is a test by means of which Allah judges whether man accepts the guidance that is presented to him in a rational way.

هُوَ الَّذِيٓ اَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لَّكُم مِّنهُ شَرَابٌ وَّ مِنهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ ١٠

(16-10) He it is Who sends down water for you from the sky out of which you drink and out of which grow the plants on which you pasture your cattle,

يُنۢبِتُ لَكُمۡ بِهِ الزَّرۡعَ وَالزَّيۡتُوۡنَ وَالنَّخِيۡلَ وَالۡاَعۡنَابَ وَمِنۡ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ ؕ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوۡمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوۡنَ ۝١١

(16-11) and by virtue of which He causes crops and olives and date-palms and grapes and all kinds of fruit to grow for you. Surely in this there is a great Sign for those who reflect.

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الَّيۡلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۙ وَالشَّمۡسَ وَالۡقَمَرَ ؕ وَالنُّجُوۡمُ مُسَخَّرٰتٌۢ بِاَمۡرِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ يَّعۡقِلُوۡنَ ۝١٢

(16-12) He has subjected for you the night and the day and the sun and the moon and the stars have also been made subservient by His command. Surely there are Signs in this for those who use their reason.

وَمَا ذَرَاَ لَكُمۡ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ مُخۡتَلِفًا اَلۡوَانُهٗ ؕ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوۡمٍ يَّذَّكَّرُوۡنَ ۝١٣

(16-13) And there are also Signs for those who take heed in the numerous things of various colours that He has created for you on earth.

وَهُوَ الَّذِىۡ سَخَّرَ الۡبَحۡرَ لِتَاۡكُلُوۡا مِنۡهُ لَحۡمًا طَرِيًّا وَّتَسۡتَخۡرِجُوۡا مِنۡهُ حِلۡيَةً تَلۡبَسُوۡنَهَا ۚ وَتَرَى الۡفُلۡكَ مَوَاخِرَ فِيۡهِ وَلِتَبۡتَغُوۡا مِنۡ فَضۡلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمۡ تَشۡكُرُوۡنَ ۝١٤

(16-14) And He it is Who has subjected the sea that you may eat fresh fish from it and bring forth ornaments from it that you can wear. And you see ships ploughing their course through it so that you may go forth seeking His Bounty (11) and be grateful to Him.

(11) That is, try to get your sustenance in lawful ways.

وَاَلۡقٰى فِى الۡاَرۡضِ رَوَاسِىَ اَنۡ تَمِيۡدَ بِكُمۡ وَاَنۡهٰرًا وَّسُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمۡ تَهۡتَدُوۡنَ ۝١٥

(16-15) And He has placed firm mountains on the earth lest it should move away from you, (12) and has made rivers and tracks (13) that you may find your way,

(12) This shows that the real function of mountains is to regulate the motion and speed of the earth. We have come to this conclusion, for the Quran has made this benefit of mountains very prominent in many places. Therefore, their other benefits should be regarded as incidental.

(13) Natural ways are those routes which are formed along the banks of streams, ravines and rivers. Though the importance of these ways is great even in the plains, one feels their sore need, especially in the mountainous regions.

وَ عَلٰمٰتٍ ؕ وَ بِالنَّ جۡمِ هُمۡ يَهۡتَدُوۡنَ ﴿۱۶﴾

(16-16) and He has set other landmarks (14) in the earth. And by the stars too do people find their way. (15)

(14) This is a sign of Allah that He has broken the monotony of land by placing conspicuous landmarks on it to distinguish different regions from one another. These have many benefits and one of these is to help guide travelers and navigators to their destinations. One also realizes the importance and value of these landmarks, when one is traveling through a sandy desert where there are hardly any objects to guide on the way, and one is liable to lose the way any time. One feels the lack of landmarks much more in the sea voyage. It is in the deserts and the seas that people realize the true significance of stars by which they are directed aright to their destinations.

This verse contains arguments for Tauhid. Providence, and Compassion of Allah, and also a proof of Prophethood. For the mind is instinctively turned towards this question: Can it be possible that Allah who has made so elaborate arrangements for man’s guidance to fulfill his physical needs has neglected to provide for his moral and spiritual needs? It cannot be so, for it is obvious that even the greatest loss of some physical necessity due to the adoption of a wrong way is nothing as compared with the loss of spiritual and moral values due to deviation from the right way. It would be nothing less than having doubt in Allah’s Compassion and Providence to think that He, Who had made so

elaborate provision for man's guidance on land and sea by creating mountains, rivers, stars and other objects, would have neglected to make provision for his moral and spiritual guidance. And it stands to reason that He must have provided prominent beacons of light to guide man to that right way of life which is indispensable to his true success.

(15) In (Ayats 4-16), some signs have been mentioned in succession in order to focus people's attention on the creation of man himself and of the earth and the heavens. They will thus find that everything supports the truth of the doctrines taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him). A critical study of all these signs shows that these must have been designed and created by an All-Wise Being, and One Being alone, and there could not have been any partner or associate to help Him. Let us consider this theme from the point of view of man, the central figure in the creation. This wonderful being, who is able to speak with his tongue and is capable of arguing his case with it, has been created from an insignificant sperm drop. Then many animals have been created to satisfy the necessities of his life. They provide food, clothing and conveyance for him and help satisfy his aesthetic taste as well. Then there is a remarkable system of rain water from the sky to produce crops, fruits and verdure, etc. on the earth to fulfill man's needs. Then there is the creation of regular days and nights and seasons, which are closely connected with all kinds of production of the earth, and also with man's general well being. Then there are oceans, which help fulfill many of his physical and aesthetic demands and provide water ways for traffic. Likewise, mountains have been created to provide man with many benefits. Then there are landmarks on the earth and stars in the heavens to guide travelers and navigators to the destinations. In short, there are innumerable signs in the earth and the heavens which are closely interconnected and are also indispensable to man's welfare, nay, to his very existence. All these are clear proofs that only One Being has designed the entire universe and created it in accordance with that design. It is He Who is all the time creating new things to fit in that scheme, and working this wonderful universe that spreads from the earth to boundless heavens. Who can then claim, except a foolish or obdurate person, that all this

has come into existence by a mere accident? Or, who can say that these different aspects, which are working under a perfect system and are intimately connected with one another and are well balanced, have been created by different gods and are under the control of different guardians?

اَفَمَنۡ يَّخۡلُقُ كَمَنۡ لَّا يَخۡلُقُ ؕ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۷﴾

(16-17) Is then the One Who creates like the one who does not create? (16) Will you not, then, take heed?

(16) That is, if you, people of Makkah, acknowledge (and they acknowledged this just as other mushriks did) that Allah alone is the Creator of all of you and everything, and no one of the partners, you have set up with Him, has created anything in the universe. How is it, then, that you ascribe from among the creation, a status equal to or like that of the Creator in the system of universe created by Him? How can it be possible that the power and the rights of the creation should be equal to the power and the rights of the Creator in the universe created by Himself? How can it be believed that the Creator and the creation possess the same qualities and characteristics, or can have such relationship as of father and son?

وَاِنۡ تَعُدُّوۡا نِعۡمَةَ اللّٰهِ لَا تُحۡصُوۡهَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ﴿۱۸﴾

(16-18) For, were you to count the favours of Allah, you will not be able to count them. Surely Allah is Ever Forgiving, Most Merciful. (17)

(17) Here the connection of Allah’s attributes, “Forgiving and Compassionate”, with the preceding verse is so obvious that it has been left unmentioned. It is this: Though Allah goes on showering countless blessings upon people, they behave in an ungrateful, faithless and rebellious manner towards Him. He does not punish them immediately, but gives them respite, for He is Forgiving and Compassionate. This is true of both individuals and communities. There are people, who deny even the existence of God, yet He goes on bestowing His favors on them for years.

There are others who set up partners with Him in his attributes, power and rights, and show their gratitude to others than Him for His blessings, yet He does not withhold His favors from them. There are still others who profess to acknowledge Him as their Creator and Benefactor, yet rebel against Him and are disobedient to Him and consider freedom from Him to be their birth right, but in spite of all this He continues to shower His countless blessings on them as long as they live.

وَ اللّٰ ۢ یُ لَمُ مَا تُسِرُّ ونَ وَ مَا ُ لِغُنَو١٩

(16-19) Allah knows all that you conceal and all that you disclose. (18)

(18) A grave misunderstanding might arise as to why Allah's blessings should continue to be showered even on those who deny Him and set up partners with Him and are disobedient to Him. The foolish people are liable to conclude from this that He does not withhold His favors from such people because He has no knowledge of their wicked deeds, The Quran declares: Even though He has full knowledge of all the deeds of the people, whether these are done secretly or openly, He does not discontinue His blessings on the sinners, for He is Forgiving, Compassionate and Merciful. Therefore: O people, get rid of this misunderstanding and reform yourselves.

وَ الَّذِ نَ یَ عُ نَ ِ وۡنِ اللّٰ لَایَخ لُقُ ونَ شَیۡـًٔا وَّ ُم خ لَقُ ونَ ٌ ٢٠

(16-20) Those whom they call upon beside Allah have created nothing; rather, they themselves were created;

اَ مۡ وَاتٌ غَ رُ اَیۡیَآءٍ وَ مَا یَ عُ ُ رُونَ اَیَّانَ یُ عَ ُ ثُونَ ٢١

(16-21) they are dead, not living. They do not even know when they will be resurrected. (19)

(19) The words employed here to refute man made deities clearly indicate that these deities were deceased prophets, saints, martyrs and pious and other extraordinary beings buried in their

graves and not angels, jinns, devils or idols. For the angels and devils are alive: therefore, the words, “They are dead, not living” cannot apply to them, and it is out of the question to say about idols of stone or wood that “They do not know at all when they shall again be raised to life” in the Hereafter. As regards the objection to this version that there were no such deities in Arabia, this is based on the lack of knowledge of the history of the pre-Islamic period. It is well known that there was a large number of Jews and Christians living among many clans of Arabia, who used to invoke and worship their Prophets, saints, etc. It is also a fact that many gods of the mushriks of Arabia were human beings, whose idols they had set up for worship after their death. According to a tradition cited in Bukhari on the authority of Ibn Abbas: “Wadd, Sua, Yaghuth, Yauq, and Nasr were pious human beings, whom the succeeding generations had made gods.” In another tradition, related by Aishah: “Asaf and Nailah were human beings.” There are also traditions to the same effect about Lat, Munat and Uzza. So much so that according to some traditions of the mushriks, Lat and Uzza were the beloved ones of Allah who used to pass His winter with Lat and summer with Uzza. But Allah is absolutely free from such absurd things they attribute to Him.

اِلٰـكُمۡ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَالَّذِيۡنَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِالۡاٰخِرَةِ قُلُوۡبُهُمۡ مُّنۡكِرَةٌ وَّهُمۡ مُّسۡتَكۡبِرُوۡنَ ﴿۲۲﴾

(16-22) Your God is the One God. But the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter are steeped in rejection of the Truth, and they are given to arrogance. (20)

(20) That is, those who do not believe in the life in the Hereafter, have become so irresponsible, carefree and intoxicated with the life of this world, that they feel no hesitation or pang in denying any reality, and they put no value on or attach no worth to truth. That is why, they are not prepared to impose any moral restraint on themselves and feel no need to investigate as to whether the way, they are following is right or wrong.

لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّوۡنَ وَمَا يُعۡلِنُوۡنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الۡمُسۡتَكۡبِرِيۡنَ ﴿۲۳﴾

(16-23) Surely Allah knows all that they conceal and all that they disclose. He certainly does not love those who are steeped in arrogance.

وَ اِذَا قِيۡلَ لَهُمۡ مَّاذَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ رَبُّكُمۡ ۙ قَالُوۡۤا اَسَاطِيۡرُ الۡاَوَّلِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۲۴﴾

(16-24) When [21] they are asked: "What is it that your Lord has revealed?" They answer: "They are merely tales of olden times!" [22]

(21) In the preceding (Ayat 23) those arrogant people who were rejecting the message were warned that Allah has full knowledge of all their deeds. Now from (Ayat 24) the Quran takes up those deeds one by one and deals with the arguments they presented against the Messenger (peace be upon him), the objections they raised and the lame excuses they invented for their rejection, and reproaches and admonishes them.

(22) One of their cunning devices was to create doubts about the Quran. Whenever outsiders came to visit Makkah, they would naturally make inquiries about the Quran, which the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared, was being sent down to him by Allah. The disbelievers would answer that it contained merely fairy tales of the ancients. They would say such things in order to create doubts in the minds of the inquirers so that they should not take any interest in the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

لِيَحۡمِلُوۡۤا اَوۡزَارَهُمۡ كَامِلَةً يَّوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ ۙ وَمِنۡ اَوۡزَارِ الَّذِيۡنَ يُضِلُّوۡنَهُمۡ بِغَيۡرِ عِلۡمٍ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَزِرُوۡنَ ﴿۲۵﴾

(16-25) (They say so) that they may bear the full weight of their burdens on the Day of Resurrection and also of the burdens of those whom they misled on account of their ignorance. What a heavy burden are they undertaking to bear!

قَدۡ مَكَرَ الَّذِيۡنَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهِمۡ فَاَتَى اللّٰهُ بُنۡيَانَهُمۡ مِّنَ الۡقَوَاعِدِ فَخَرَّ عَلَيۡهِمُ السَّقۡفُ مِنۡ فَوۡقِهِمۡ وَاَتٰىهُمُ الۡعَذَابُ مِنۡ حَيۡثُ لَا يَشۡعُرُوۡنَ ﴿۲۶﴾

(16-26) Surely many people before them had plotted in a similar manner to (vanquish the Truth), but Allah uprooted the whole structure of their plot from its foundations so that the roof fell in upon them, and the chastisement (of Allah) visited them from unknown directions.

ثُمَّ يَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ يُخۡزِيۡهِمۡ وَيَقُوۡلُ اَيۡنَ شُرَكَآءِىَ الَّذِيۡنَ كُنۡتُمۡ تُشَآقُّوۡنَ فِيۡهِمۡ ؕ قَالَ الَّذِيۡنَ اُوۡتُوا الۡعِلۡمَ اِنَّ الۡخِزۡىَ الۡيَوۡمَ وَالسُّوۡۤءَ عَلَى الۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ ﴿۲۷﴾

(16-27) And again, on the Day of Resurrection, He will bring them to disgrace, and say: "Tell Me, now, where are those to whom you ascribed a share in My Divinity, and for whose sake you disputed (with the upholders of the Truth)?" Those [23]who were endowed with knowledge (in the world) will say: "Surely today humiliation and misery shall be the lot of the unbelievers";

[23] There is a gap between this answer and the preceding question which has been left for the reader to fill. When Allah will ask: Now where are My partners, there will be dead silence in the plain where the entire mankind shall have to gather on the occasion of Resurrection. The disbelievers and the mushriks will be dumb founded for they will be at a loss to find an answer to this. Then those who had been given knowledge will make the assertion, “Indeed, disgrace, this day, and evil are upon the disbelievers.”

الَّذِيۡنَ تَتَوَفّٰىهُمُ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ظَالِمِىۡۤ اَنۡفُسِهِمۡ ۖ فَاَلۡقَوُا السَّلَمَ مَا كُنَّا نَعۡمَلُ مِنۡ سُوۡٓءٍ ؕ بَلٰۤى اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيۡمٌۢ بِمَا كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۲۸﴾

(16-28) the same [24] unbelievers who, when the angels seize them and cause them to die while they are engaged in wrong-doing, they will proffer their submission [25] saying: "We were engaged in no evil." (The angels will answer them): "Surely Allah knows well all that you did.

(24) This is Allah’s addition to the previous assertion, and not its continuation. Those commentators, who have wrongly considered this as continuation of the preceding sentence, are unable to offer any satisfactory explanation for their opinion.

(25) That is, when the angels take possession of their souls at the time of death.

فَادۡخُلُوۡۤا اَبۡوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِيۡنَ فِيۡهَا ؕ فَلَبِئۡسَ مَثۡوَى الۡمُتَكَبِّرِيۡنَ ﴿۲۹﴾

(16-29) Go now, and enter the gate of Hell, and abide in it for ever. (26) " Evil indeed is the abode of the arrogant.

(26) The (Ayats 28 and 32), and several other verses in the Quran, clearly and definitely assert that immediately after death, souls suffer torment or enjoy peace in the world of Barzakh. The traditions use the word qabar (grave) metaphorically for this existence of the souls. This is the world in which souls enter immediately after death and will remain therein up to the Day of Resurrection. Yet the disbelievers of the traditions declare that after death souls will remain in a dormant state up to the time of Resurrection, and will neither feel any pain nor joy, nor will be conscious of anything at all. Obviously, this is a wrong opinion. For, according to (Ayat 28), just after death when the disbelievers will be conscious of the fact that they had been leading an evil life, they will try to make the angels believe that they had not done any evil deed. The angels will rebuke them at this boldness and will tell them that they shall have to go into Hell. On the other hand, according to(verse 32), just after their death, the pious believers are welcomed by the angels and given the good news that they will enter into Paradise. Besides these verses, there is the mention of a dialogue between the angels and those Muslims, who did not migrate to Al- Madinah, after their souls were seized by the angels in (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 97). Above all, according to (Surah Almomin, Ayats 45-46), the people of Pharaoh have been encircled by a torment and are exposed before the fire of Hell every morning and every evening. This will go on till the Day of Resurrection when they shall be sentenced to eternal torment.

In fact, both the Quran and the traditions present the same kind of picture of the condition of the soul after death till Resurrection. Death causes merely the separation of the soul from the body but does not annihilate it. The soul lives with the same personality that was formed by the different experiences and the mental exercises and moral activities it had in its worldly life in cooperation with the body. This nature of the consciousness, feelings, observations and experiences of the soul, during the waiting period, is similar to that in a dream. Just as a criminal sentenced to death suffers from mental torture on the eve of his crucifixion, in the same way the angels take to task the guilty as in a dream, torture it and take it to the horrible Hell in order to make it foretaste the impending torture. In contrast to this, the pure soul is welcomed by the angels and is given the good news of entry into paradise and is made to enjoy its pleasant breeze and smell, and to feel happy like the faithful servant who is invited to the headquarters to receive his reward. But this life in the world of Barzakh will suddenly come to an end on the second blowing of the Trumpet of Resurrection. When the guilty souls will again enter into their former bodies and muster in the Plain, they will cry in horror: Oh! woe to us! Who has roused us from our sleeping places? But the true believers will say with perfect peace of mind: This is exactly what the Beneficent had promised, and the Messengers had told the truth. (Surah Yaseen, Ayat 52).

As the guilty ones will be under the delusion that they had been lying in their death bed for an hour or so and had been roused from sleep. Those who were given knowledge and faith will say: According to the Record of Allah, you have remained after death till this Day of Resurrection and this is the same Day of Resurrection, but you did not know this. (Surah Ar-Room, Ayats 55-56).

وَ قِيۡلَ لِلَّذِيۡنَ اتَّقَوۡا مَاذَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ رَبُّكُمۡ ؕ قَالُوۡا خَيۡرًا ؕ لِلَّذِيۡنَ اَحۡسَنُوۡا فِىۡ هٰذِهِ الدُّنۡيَا حَسَنَةٌ ؕ وَ لَدَارُ الۡاٰخِرَةِ خَيۡرٌ ؕ وَ لَنِعۡمَ دَارُ الۡمُتَّقِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۳۰﴾

(16-30) And when the God-fearing are asked: "What has your Lord revealed?" they answer: "Something excellent!" (27) Good fortune in this world awaits those who do good; and certainly the abode of the Hereafter is even better for them. How excellent is the abode of the God-fearing:

(27) In contrast to the disbelievers (Ayat 24), the righteous people spoke highly of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and of the teachings of the Quran to the people coming from the suburbs of Makkah. Unlike the former they did not delude the people nor created misunderstandings in the minds. They were full of praise for them and told the truth about the Prophet (peace be upon him).

جَنّٰتُ عَدۡنٍ يَّدۡخُلُوۡنَهَا تَجۡرِىۡ مِنۡ تَحۡتِهَا الۡاَنۡهٰرُ لَهُمۡ فِيۡهَا مَا يَشَآءُوۡنَ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَجۡزِى اللّٰهُ الۡمُتَّقِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۳۱﴾

(16-31) everlasting gardens that they shall enter; the gardens beneath which rivers shall flow, and where they shall have whatever they desire! Thus does Allah reward the God-fearing, (28)

(28) This is the best blessing of Paradise. The dweller will get there whatever he will desire and wish and there will be nothing at all to offend him. This is the blessing that has never been attained even by the richest and the most powerful people in this world. On the contrary, every dweller of Paradise will enjoy this blessing to his fill because he will always have everything to his desire and liking, and will have each and every wish and desire fulfilled.

الَّذِيۡنَ تَتَوَفّٰٮهُمُ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ طَيِّبِيۡنَ ۙ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيۡكُمُ ادۡخُلُوا الۡجَنَّةَ بِمَا كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۳۲﴾

(16-32) those whose souls the angels seize while they are in a state of purity, saying: "Peace be upon you. Enter Paradise as a reward for your deeds."

هَلۡ يَنۡظُرُوۡنَ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ تَاۡتِيَهُمُ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوۡ يَاۡتِىَ اَمۡرُ رَبِّكَ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيۡنَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهِمۡ ؕ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللّٰهُ وَلٰكِنۡ كَانُوۡۤا اَنۡفُسَهُمۡ يَظۡلِمُوۡنَ ﴿۳۳﴾

(16-33) (O Muhammad), are they waiting for anything else than that the angels should appear before them, or that your Lord's judgement should come? (29) Many before them acted with similar temerity. And then what happened with them was not Allah's wrong-doing; they rather wronged themselves.

(29) This is to admonish the unbelievers to this effect: Why are they still hesitating to accept the message which is very simple and clear? We have tried every method to present each aspect of the truth clearly with arguments and brought witnesses thereof from the whole system of the universe, and have left no room for any man of understanding to stick to shirk. Now what are they waiting for is nothing more than this that the angel of death should come before them and then they will accept the message at the last moment of their lives. Or, do they wait for the scourge of God to overtake them and make them accept the Message?

فَاَصَابَهُمۡ سَيِّاٰتُ مَا عَمِلُوۡا وَحَاقَ بِهِمۡ مَّا كَانُوۡا بِهٖ يَسۡتَهۡزِءُوۡنَ ﴿۳۴﴾

(16-34) The evil consequences of their misdeeds overtook them and what they mocked at overwhelmed them.

وَقَالَ الَّذِيۡنَ اَشۡرَكُوۡا لَوۡ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مَا عَبَدۡنَا مِنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ نَّحۡنُ وَلَاۤ اٰبَآؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَّمۡنَا مِنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ فَعَلَ الَّذِيۡنَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِهِمۡ ۚ فَهَلۡ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ اِلَّا الۡبَلٰغُ الۡمُبِيۡنُ ﴿۳۵﴾

(16-35) Those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity say: "Were Allah to will so, neither we nor our forefathers would have worshipped any other than Him, nor would we have prohibited anything without His command." (30) Their predecessors

proffered similar excuses. (31) Do the Messengers have any other duty but to plainly convey the Message?

(30) In order to understand the significance of this argument the reader should keep in view (Ayats 148-150 and E.N.s 124-126 of Surah Al-Anaam), for this has been cited and answered there.

(31) That is, your argument is not a new one but the same old one which had always been offered by erroneous people who went before you. Today you are, like them, excusing yourselves for your deviation and evil conduct, saying that it is the will of God. You know that this is a lame excuse that has been invented to delude yourselves, and to escape from admonition.

This answer also contains a subtle retort to the objection of the disbelievers that the Quran consisted merely of old stories of the ancients (Ayat 24). They meant to imply that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had nothing new to offer. So he was repeating the same old stories that had been repeated over and over again since the time of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him). The retort is this: If the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not presenting anything new but was reciting the old stories of the ancients, you yourselves are not putting forward any new excuse in defense of your evil deeds, but the same old excuse that was put forward by the people who went before you.

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمِنْهُم مَّنْ حَقَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الضَّلَالَةُ ۚ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

(16-36) We raised a Messenger in every community (to tell them): "Serve Allah and shun the Evil One." (32) Thereafter Allah guided some of them while others were overtaken by error. (33) Go about the earth, then, and observe what was the end of those who rejected the Messengers, (34) calling them liars.

(32) That is, you are not justified in excusing yourselves for these sins, saying that it is the will of God for We sent Messengers to every ummat, who told the people in plain words that they

should worship Us and none else, and should not follow and obey taghut. Besides this, We have already warned you that We do not approve of your deviations. Why should you then put forward this excuse for your deviations? Do you mean to say that We ought to have sent such Messengers as would have forced you to follow the right way instead of bringing you to it by preaching? Please refer to (E.N. 80 of Surah Al-Anam) for the distinction between God's will and God's approval).

(33) That is, Whenever a Messenger came to a people, they were divided into two groups.

(1) Those who accepted the message (and that, too, could not have been possible except with the will of Allah).
(2) Those who rejected it and stuck to their deviation (For explanation see (E.N. 28 of Surah Al-Anam).

(34) That is, you can see for yourselves the lesson of human history. It is this that the people, who rejected the message, incurred the scourge of Allah like Pharaoh and the people of Pharaoh, while Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) received the blessings of Allah.

لِ خَ صِ عَلٰى ُ ذُ فَاِنَّ اللّٰ لَا يَ ِي ِ ِ يُّضِلُّ وَ مَا لَ ُ ّ نّصِرِينَ ٣٧

(16-37) (O Muhammad), howsoever eager you may be to show them the Right Way, Allah does not bestow His guidance on those whom He lets go astray; and in fact none will be able to help them.

وَ اَ قْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ لَا يَبْعَثُ اللّٰهُ مَنْ يَّمُوْتُ ؕ بَلٰى وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا وَّ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ٣٨

(16-38) They swear most solemnly in the name of Allah and say: "Allah shall not raise to life any who dies." (Yes, He will do so); that is a promise by which He is bound, even though most people do not know that.

لِيُبَيِّنَ لَ ُ ُ الَّذِ خَ تَلِفُوْنَ فِيْهِ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْۤا اَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا كٰذِبِيْنَ ٣٩

(16-39) (That is bound to happen in order that) He may make clear to them the reality regarding the matters on which they differ and that the unbelievers may realize that they were liars. (35)

(35) In (Ayat 39)those two things have been stated which rationally and morally require that there must be Resurrection and life after death, that is:

(1) To reveal what the reality was, and

(2) To reward or punish people in accordance with the right or wrong stand they took about it in this world. It is common knowledge that since the creation of man on the earth there have been many differences regarding the reality which have been sowing dissension between families, nations and races. These have also led to the formation of many different societies, cultures and creeds on different theories. In every age millions of the torch bearers of each of these theories have been putting at stake all their life, property and honor to propagate and defend their favorite theory. Nay, there has always been such a bitter conflict between them that each group tried to annihilate the other, who, in his turn, stuck to it to the last. This being the case, common sense demands that such far reaching and serious differences should be cleared some time or other, so as to decide with certainty what was right and what was wrong, who was in the right and who was in the wrong. Obviously, it is not possible to lift the curtain from the reality in this world so as to reveal things in their true perspective. This is because the system on which this world has been created does not allow this. Therefore, there should be another world to fulfill this demand of common sense.

This is not the demand of common sense alone but also of the moral sense, which requires that the partners in this conflict should be rewarded or punished according to right or wrong, just or unjust part they played in it. For, some of these committed cruelties on the others, who had to make sacrifices for their cause. Then each one should also bear the responsibility for

formulating and practicing a moral or immoral philosophy which influenced millions and billions of others for better or worse. Moral sense demands that there should be a time for the moral consequences to take their due course. As this is not possible in this world there should be another world for the purpose.

اِنَّمَا قَ ۡوۡلُنَا لِشَیۡءٍ اِذَاۤ اَرَدۡنٰهُ اَنۡ نَّقُوۡلَ لَهٗ كُنۡ فَیَكُوۡنُ ۝۴۰

(16-40) (As for the possibility of resurrection, bear in mind that) whenever We do will something, We have to do no more than say: "Be", and it is. (36)

(36) This is the answer to those who imagined that it was the most difficult thing to raise the dead, and that, too, to raise together at once all the people who had died at any time. They have been told that it is an easy thing for Allah, Who has the power to bring into existence anything He desires, merely by His command, “Be,” for He does not stand in need of any provisions, any means and any favorable environment for this. His mere command produces necessary provisions, means and environment. This world was brought into existence by His mere command, “Be,” and likewise the next world will at once come into existence by His single command.

وَ الَّذِیۡنَ هَاجَرُوۡا فِی اللّٰهِ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ مَا ظُلِمُوۡا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمۡ فِی الدُّنۡیَا حَسَنَةً ؕ وَ لَاَجۡرُ الۡاٰخِرَةِ اَكۡبَرُ ۘ لَوۡ كَانُوۡا یَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۙ۝۴۱

(16-41) As for those who have forsaken their homes for the sake of Allah after enduring persecution, We shall certainly grant them a good abode in this world; and surely the reward of the Hereafter is much greater. (37) If they could but know (what an excellent end awaits)

(37) This is to comfort the Muslim emigrants from Makkah to Habash, who were forced to leave their homes because of the unbearable persecution they suffered at the hands of the disbelievers. The change of the scene from the disbelievers to the emigrants to Habash contains a subtle warning to the disbelievers that they should not remain under any delusion that they would get off free from punishment for their cruel behavior towards those Muslims, so as to say: O cruel people! There shall be Resurrection to reward the oppressed believers and to punish you for your persecution of them.

الَّذِیۡنَ صَبَرُوۡا وَ عَلٰی رَبِّهِمۡ یَتَوَكَّلُوۡنَ ۝۴۲

(16-42) those who remain steadfast and put their trust in their Lord.

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ فَسْـَٔلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۴۳﴾

(16-43) (O Muhammad), whenever We raised any Messengers before you, they were no other than human beings; (38) (except that) to them We sent revelation. So ask those who possess knowledge (39) if you do not know.

(38) This is the answer to the objection of the mushriks of Makkah (which has not been cited here) that they could not believe that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a Prophet of God because he was a human being like them. They have been told that the same objection had been raised against all the Prophets who came before him.

(39) “Those who possess knowledge” are the scholars of the people of the Books and others, who, though not scholars in the strict sense had sufficient knowledge of the teachings of the revealed Books and were acquainted with the stories of the former Prophets.

بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۭ وَاَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ اِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿۴۴﴾

(16-44) We raised the Messengers earlier with Clear Signs and Divine Books, and We have now sent down this Reminder upon you that you may elucidate to people the teaching that has been sent down for them, (40) and that the people may themselves reflect.

(40) In this connection, it is worthwhile to note that this duty of making plain and explaining the teachings of the Book was to be performed by Prophet not only by word of mouth but also practically. It was required that he should organize, under his own guidance, a Muslim community and establish it in accordance with

the principles of the Book. This duty of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has been stated here especially to show the wisdom of sending a man as a Messenger, for, otherwise the Book could have been sent through the angels or could have been printed and sent directly to each man. But in this way; that purpose for which Allah in His Wisdom and Bounty and Providence designed to send the Book could not have been served. For, that purpose demanded that the Book should be brought by a perfect man, who should present it piece by piece, explain its meaning, remove the difficulties and doubts, answer objections etc. and above all, he should show towards those who rejected and opposed it that kind of attitude which is worthy of the bearer of this Book. On the other hand, he should guide those who believed in it in every aspect of life and set before them his own excellent pattern of life. Then he should train them individually and collectively on the principles of the Book; so as to make them a model society for the rest of mankind.

Let us now consider this (Verse 43) from another point of view. Just as it cuts at the root of the argumentation of those who rejected the creed that a human Prophet could bring the Book, in the same way, it repudiates the view of those who plead that the Book should be accepted without any exposition of it from the Prophet. This latter view is contradictory to this verse, whatever be the position taken by its exponents. They might either be of the opinion that (a) the Prophet did not give any explanation of the Book he presented or that (b) the only acceptable thing is the Book and not any exposition thereof by the Prophet, or that (c) now the Book alone suffices us, for its exposition by the Prophet has lost its utility or that (d) now the Book alone is authentic for the exposition by the Prophet has ceased to exist, or if it does exists, it cannot be relied upon.

If they take the position (a), it will mean that the Prophet did not fulfill the purpose for which he was chosen to be the bearer of the Book: otherwise Allah could send it through an angel or directly to each person.

If they take the position (b) or (c), (God forbid) they will be accusing Allah of doing a useless thing by sending His Book

through a Prophet, when He could have printed copies of the Quran and sent those directly to the people.

In case, they take the position (d), they, in fact, repudiate both the Quran and its exposition by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Then the only rational course left for them would be to accept the view of those who believe in the necessity of a new Prophet and a new revelation; whereas Allah Himself considers the exposition of the Book by the Prophet as an essential thing, and puts it forward as an argument for the necessity of a Prophet. Now if the view of those who reject tradition that the explanation of the Prophet (peace be upon him) has disappeared from the world is to be accepted, then two conclusions are inevitable; First, the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a pattern for us has ceased to exist, and the only relation we have with him is the same that we have with the other former Prophets, e.g. Houd, Salih, Shuaib, etc. (peace be upon them). That is, we have only to testify that they were Prophets but we have no obligation to follow their patterns, for we have none with us. This position obviously leads to the need of a new Prophet, for it automatically refutes the doctrine of the finality of Prophethood. The second inevitable conclusion will be that a new Book is needed because in that case the Quran alone could not, according to its author, suffice. Thus in the face of this verse, there is no argument left to prove that the Quran is self sufficient to explain itself, for it itself says that there is no need of a Prophet to explain it. Thus it is absolutely necessary that a new Book must be sent down. May Allah destroy such people. In their enthusiasm to repudiate tradition, they are really cutting at the very root of Islam itself.

اَفَاَمِنَ الَّذِيۡنَ مَكَرُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنۡ يَّخۡسِفَ اللّٰهُ بِهِمُ الۡاَرۡضَ اَوۡ يَاۡتِيَهُمُ الۡعَذَابُ مِنۡ حَيۡثُ لَا يَشۡعُرُوۡنَ ۝۴۵

(16-45) Do those who have been devising evil plans (against the mission of the Messenger) feel secure that Allah will not cause the earth to swallow them up or that chastisement will not come upon them from a direction that they will not even be able to imagine;

اَوَ يَاۡخُذَهُمۡ فِىۡ تَقَلُّبِهِمۡ فَمَا هُمۡ بِمُعۡجِزِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۴۶﴾

(16-46) or that He will not suddenly seize them while they are going about to and fro and they will be unable to frustrate His design,

اَوَ يَاۡخُذَهُمۡ عَلٰى تَخَوُّفٍ ؕ فَاِنَّ رَبَّكُمۡ لَرَءُوۡفٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ﴿۴۷﴾

(16-47) or that He will not seize them when they are apprehensive of the impending calamity? Surely your Lord is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.

اَوَلَمۡ يَرَوۡا اِلٰى مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ مِنۡ شَىۡءٍ يَّتَفَيَّؤُا ظِلٰلُهٗ عَنِ الۡيَمِيۡنِ وَ الشَّمَآئِلِ سُجَّدًا لِّلّٰهِ وَ هُمۡ دٰخِرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۸﴾

(16-48) Do the people not see how the objects Allah has created cast their shadows right and left, prostrating themselves in utter submission to Allah? (41)

(41) The argument is this: The fact that everything a man, an animal, a tree or a mountain casts its shadow, is a clear proof of its material nature, and everything which is made of matter, is a creation of Allah and is subject to a universal law. In this case the law is that every material thing casts its shadow, which is symbolical of its servitude, and it cannot have any share whatsoever in Godhead.

وَ لِلّٰهِ يَسۡجُدُ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِى الۡاَرۡضِ مِنۡ دَآبَّةٍ وَّ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَ هُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَكۡبِرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۹﴾

(16-49) All living creatures and all angels in the heavens and on the earth are in prostration before Allah;[42] and never do they behave in arrogant defiance.

(42) That is, not only all things on the earth alone but also all things in the heavens, including all those whom people have been regarding as gods and goddesses, and considering to be closely related to Allah are subservient to God, and have no share whatsoever in His Godhead. Incidentally, it implies the existence of living creatures not only on the earth but in the planets, too.

يَخَافُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَيَفْعَلُوْنَ مَا يُؤْمَرُوْنَ ۝٥٠

(16-50) They hold their Lord, Who is above them, in fear, and do as they are bidden.

وَقَالَ اللّٰهُ لَا تَتَّخِذُوْٓا اِلٰهَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ ۚ اِنَّمَا هُوَ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَاِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُوْنِ ۝٥١

(16-51) Allah has commanded: "Do not take two gods; [43] for He is but One God. So fear Me alone."

(43) Negation of two gods by itself negates the existence of more than two gods.

وَلَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلَهُ الدِّيْنُ وَاصِبًا ۭ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَتَّقُوْنَ ۝٥٢

(16-52) His is whatever is in the heavens and the earth, and obedience to Him inevitably pervades the whole universe. [44] Will you, then, hold in awe any other than Allah? [45]

(44) In other words it means that the entire system of the universe exists on its obedience to Him.

(45) That is, when it is so, will you then make the fear of any other than God the basis of the system of your life?

وَمَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نِّعْمَةٍ فَمِنَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فَاِلَيْهِ تَجْــَٔرُوْنَ ۝٥٣

(16-53) Every bounty that you enjoy is from Allah; and whenever any misfortune strikes you, it is to Him that you cry for the removal of your distress. [46]

(46) That is, the fact, that you run to Allah for help in your distress and not to anyone else, is a clear proof of the Oneness of Allah, which has been embedded in your own hearts. At the time of your affliction, your true nature, which had been suppressed by the gods you had forged, involuntarily comes to the surface and invokes Allah, for it knows no other god or lord or master, having

any real power. (For further details please refer to (E.Ns 29 and 41 of Surah Al-Anam).

ثُمَّ اِذَا كَشَفَ الضُّرَّ عَنۡكُمۡ اِذَا فَرِيۡقٌ مِّنۡكُمۡ بِرَبِّهِمۡ يُشۡرِكُوۡنَ ﴿۵۴﴾

(16-54) But as soon as He removes the distress from you, some of you associate others with their Lord (47) in giving thanks,

(47) That is, at the time of showing gratitude to Allah for removing his affliction, he begins to make offerings also to some god, goddess or saint to show that Allah's kindness to him was due to the intercession of his patron, for he imagines that otherwise Allah would not have removed his distress.

لِيَكۡفُرُوۡا بِمَاۤ اٰتَيۡنٰهُمۡ ؕ فَتَمَتَّعُوۡا ۟ فَسَوۡفَ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۵۵﴾

(16-55) that they may show ingratitude for the bounties We bestowed upon them. So enjoy yourselves for a while, soon you will come to know (the truth).

وَيَجۡعَلُوۡنَ لِمَا لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ نَصِيۡبًا مِّمَّا رَزَقۡنٰهُمۡ ؕ تَاللّٰهِ لَتُسۡـَٔـلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنۡتُمۡ تَفۡتَرُوۡنَ ﴿۵۶﴾

(16-56) They set apart for those, whose reality they do not even know, (48) , (49) a portion of the sustenance We have provided them. By Allah, you will surely be called to account for the lies that you have invented!

(48) They assign shares to those patrons about whom they have no authentic knowledge that God has made them His partners and allotted some duties of Godhead to them and made them governors of some territories in His Kingdom.

(49) That is, they set apart a portion of their incomes and land products to make offerings of this to their patron.

وَيَجۡعَلُوۡنَ لِلّٰهِ الۡبَنٰتِ سُبۡحٰنَهٗ ۙ وَلَهُمۡ مَّا يَشۡتَهُوۡنَ ﴿۵۷﴾

(16-57) They assign daughters to Allah (50) - glory be to Him - whereas they assign to themselves what they truly desire! (51)

(50) This refers to a tradition of the ancient Arabs. They regarded their goddesses and angels as daughters of God.

(51) That is, “sons.”

وَ اِذَا بُشِّرَ اَحَدُهُم بِالۡاُنۡثٰى ظَلَّ وَجۡهُهٗ مُسۡوَدًّا وَّهُوَ كَظِيۡمٌ ۚ﴿۵۸﴾

(16-58) When any of them is told about the birth of a female his face turns dark, and he is filled with suppressed anger,

يَتَوَارٰى مِنَ الۡقَوۡمِ مِنۡ سُوۡٓءِ مَا بُشِّرَ بِهٖ ؕ اَيُمۡسِكُهٗ عَلٰى هُوۡنٍ اَمۡ يَدُسُّهٗ فِى التُّرَابِ ؕ اَلَا سَآءَ مَا يَحۡكُمُوۡنَ ﴿۵۹﴾

(16-59) and he hides himself from people because of the bad news, thinking: should he keep the child despite disgrace, or should he bury it in dust? How evil is their estimate of Allah! (52)

(52) This attitude of contempt towards daughters has been mentioned to bring home to them the height of their folly, ignorance and impudence in regard to God. This is why they did not hesitate to assign daughters to Allah, though they themselves felt that to have daughters was a matter of disgrace for them. Besides this, it shows that they had a very low estimation of Allah, which had resulted from their ways of shirk. So they felt nothing wrong in ascribing such foolish and absurd things to Allah Who is above such things.

لِلَّذِيۡنَ لَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِالۡاٰخِرَةِ مَثَلُ السَّوۡءِ ۚ وَلِلّٰهِ الۡمَثَلُ الۡاَعۡلٰى ؕ وَهُوَ الۡعَزِيۡزُ الۡحَكِيۡمُ ﴿۶۰﴾

(16-60) Those who do not believe in the Hereafter deserve to be characterized with evil attributes whereas Allah's are the most excellent attributes. He is the Most Mighty, the Most Wise.

وَلَوۡ يُؤَاخِذُ اللّٰهُ النَّاسَ بِظُلۡمِهِمۡ مَّا تَرَكَ عَلَيۡهَا مِنۡ دَآبَّةٍ وَّلٰكِنۡ يُّؤَخِّرُهُمۡ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَجَلُهُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَاۡخِرُوۡنَ سَاعَةً وَّلَا يَسۡتَقۡدِمُوۡنَ ﴿۶۱﴾

(16-61) Were Allah to take people to task for their wrong-doing, He would not have spared even a single living

creature on the face of the earth. But He grants them respite until an appointed term. And when that term arrives, they have no power to delay it by a single moment, nor to hasten it.

وَيَجۡعَلُوۡنَ لِلّٰهِ مَا يَكۡرَهُوۡنَ وَتَصِفُ اَلۡسِنَتُهُمُ الۡكَذِبَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ الۡحُسۡنٰى ؕ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّ لَهُمُ النَّارَ وَاَنَّهُمۡ مُّفۡرَطُوۡنَ ۶۲

(16-62) They assign to Allah what they dislike for themselves and their tongues utter a sheer lie in stating that a happy state awaits them. Without doubt the Fire awaits them and it is to it that they shall be hastened.

تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدۡ اَرۡسَلۡنَاۤ اِلٰۤى اُمَمٍ مِّنۡ قَبۡلِكَ فَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيۡطٰنُ اَعۡمَالَهُمۡ فَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمُ الۡيَوۡمَ وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ اَلِيۡمٌ ۶۳

(16-63) By Allah, (O Muhammad), We sent Messengers to other communities before you but Satan made their evil deeds attractive to them (so they paid no heed to the call of the Messengers). The same Satan is their patron today and they are heading towards a painful chastisement.

وَمَاۤ اَنۡزَلۡنَا عَلَيۡكَ الۡكِتٰبَ اِلَّا لِتُبَيِّنَ لَهُمُ الَّذِى اخۡتَلَفُوۡا فِيۡهِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحۡمَةً لِّقَوۡمٍ يُّؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ۶۴

(16-64) We have sent down the Book that you may explain to them the truth concerning what they are disputing and that the Book may serve as a guidance and mercy for those who believe in it. (53)

(53) That is, this Book has afforded them an excellent opportunity to resolve their differences which have been caused by the superstitious creeds of their forefathers, and which have divided, them into warring factions. They can then unite on the permanent basis of the truth presented by the Quran, but those foolish people preferring their former condition even after the coming of this blessing, shall meet with disgrace and torment. On the other hand, only those, who believe in this Book, will find the right way and blessed with mercy and favors from Allah.(65). And Allah sends down from the sky water, then He revives therewith

the earth after its death. Indeed, in this is a sure sign for a people who listen.

(53a) That is, had you listened to the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and observed those signs carefully, you would have cried from the core of your heart. These signs support his message. Year after year you witness these signs. There is the land, all barren before you, without any sign of life, no blade of grass, no bud or flower, and no insect. Then comes rain. All of a sudden, the same land is covered with life. There crop upon numerous kinds of insects of which no vestige had been left. You witness this process of life and death, and death and life, repeated year after year. Yet you doubt this when the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells you that Allah will again bring to life all human beings after their death. This is because you see these signs as animals do, who do not see the wisdom of the Creator underlying this phenomenon; otherwise you would have discovered that these signs support the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

وَ اللّٰهُ اَنۡزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَحۡیَا بِهِ الۡاَرۡضَ بَعۡدَ مَوۡتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیَۃً لِّقَوۡمٍ یَّسۡمَعُوۡنَ ﴿۶۵﴾

(16-65) Allah sends down water from the heaven, and thereby He instantly revives the earth after it lay dead. Verily there is a sign in it for those who have ears.

وَ اِنَّ لَکُمۡ فِی الۡاَنۡعَامِ لَعِبۡرَۃً ؕ نُسۡقِیۡکُمۡ مِّمَّا فِیۡ بُطُوۡنِهٖ مِنۡۢ بَیۡنِ فَرۡثٍ وَّ دَمٍ لَّبَنًا خَالِصًا سَآئِغًا لِّلشّٰرِبِیۡنَ ﴿۶۶﴾

(16-66) Surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We provide you to drink out of that which is in their bellies between the faeces and the blood - pure milk (54) - which is a palatable drink for those who take it.

(54) “Between excretions and the blood”. This refers to the most wonderful process of the formation of pure milk in the bellies of the cattle. For, the fodder they eat turns into blood, filth and pure milk, which is altogether different from the first two in

its nature, color and usefulness. Some cattle produce milk in such abundance that after suckling their young ones a large quantity of it is left to make excellent human food.

وَمِنۡ ثَمَرٰتِ النَّخِيۡلِ وَ الۡاَعۡنَابِ تَتَّخِذُوۡنَ مِنۡهُ سَكَرًا وَّ رِزۡقًا حَسَنًا ؕ اِنَّ فِىۡ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوۡمٍ يَّعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۷﴾

(16-67) And out of the fruits of date-palms and grapes you derive intoxicants as well as wholesome sustenance. (55) Surely there is a sign for those who use reason.

(55) Incidentally it implies that the juice of the fruits of date palms and vines contains two things. One is that which is pure and wholesome food for man and the other is that which turns into alcohol after it becomes rotten. But it has been left to the choice of man to obtain pure healthy food from this providence or to drink it as intoxicant wine to excite him and make him lose his self control. This also contains a hint as to the prohibition of wine.

وَ اَوۡحٰى رَبُّكَ اِلَى النَّحۡلِ اَنِ اتَّخِذِىۡ مِنَ الۡجِبَالِ بُيُوۡتًا وَّ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَ مِمَّا يَعۡرِشُوۡنَ ﴿۶۸﴾

(16-68) Your Lord inspired the bee, (56) saying: "Set up hives in the mountains and in the trees and in the trellises that people put up,

(56) The lexical meaning of the Arabic word wahi is secret inspiration which is felt only by the one who inspires and the other who is inspired with. The Quran has used this word both for the instinctive inspiration by Allah to His creation in general and for the revelation towards His Prophets in particular. Allah sends His wahi to the heavens with His command and they begin functioning in accordance with it (Surah Al-Momin, Ayat 12). He will send this to the earth with His command and it will relate the story of all that had happened on and in it. He sends wahi to the bee and inspires it with faculties to perform the all of its wonderful work instinctively (Ayat 68). The same is true of the bird that learns to fly, the fish that learns to swim, the newly born child that learns to suck milk, etc. Then, it is also wahi with which Allah inspires a

human being with a spontaneous idea (Surah Al-Qasas, Ayat 7). The same is the case with all the great discoveries, inventions, works of literature and art, etc. which would not have been possible without the benefit of wahi. As a matter of fact, every human being at one time or the other feels its mental or spiritual influence in the form of an idea or thought or plan or dream, which is confirmed by a subsequent experience to be the right guidance from the unseen wahi.

Then there is the wahi (revelation) which is the privilege of the Prophets. This form of wahi has its own special features and is quite distinct from all other forms. The Prophet, who is inspired with it, is fully conscious and has his firm conviction that it is being sent down from Allah. Such a revelation contains doctrines of creed, commandments, laws, regulations and instructions for the guidance of mankind.

ثُمَّ كُلِيْ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ فَاسْلُكِيْ سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا ؕ يَخْرُجُ مِنْۢ بُطُوْنِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهٗ فِيْهِ شِفَآءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ۝٦٩

(16-69) t hen suck the juice of every kind of fruit and keep treading the ways of your Lord (57) which have been made easy." There comes forth from their bellies a drink varied in colours, wherein there is healing for men. (58) Verily there is a sign in this for those who reflect. (59)

(57) "Follow the ways of your Lord" means work in accordance with the methods which have been taught to thee by Allah's wahi for the smooth running of hive life. It is Allah's wahi (instinctive inspiration) that has taught the bees how to build their wonderful factory with separate combs to rear brood, combs to turn nectar into honey, combs to store food, in short, separate combs to fulfill every aspect of hive life. It is wahi that has taught the bees how to organize themselves into a cooperative society for collective effort to run the factory with the queen and thousands of workers to perform a variety of specific tasks. All these things have been made so smooth for them by wahi that the bees never feel the necessity of ever thinking about it. They

have been running smoothly their factory with their collective effort for thousands of years with perfect accuracy.

(58) Though honey is a wholesome food with a sweet taste and has medicinal power as well, its latter quality has been mentioned only because the former is too obvious. It is used as a medicine to cure several diseases because it contains the juice and glucose of flowers and fruits in the best form. Besides this, it is also used in preparing and preserving other medicines because it does not rot. It also preserves other things from decay. That is why it has been used for centuries as a substitute for alcohol. And if the beehive is built at a place, which abounds in certain medicinal herbs, its honey does not remain mere honey, but becomes also the essence of that herb. It is expected that if bees are used methodically for extracting essence from herbs, that essence will prove to be much better than the one obtained in the laboratories.

(59) This passage (Ayats 48-69) contains proofs of Tauhid and life after death. These were necessitated, for the disbelievers and the mushriks were bitterly opposed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) mainly because of these two doctrines. The acceptance of the first doctrine demolished the whole system of life based on shirk or atheism because to acknowledge Allah to be the sole Provider, the Helper and the Protector left no room for the worship of any god or goddess. The proof of Tauhid is based on the observance of the structure of the cattle, the bees, the date palms and vineyards and their usefulness to mankind. Naturally the question arises: Who has designed these in the manner and for the purpose they have been created? The only obvious answer is that it is the All-Wise and All-Beneficent Allah Who has designed all these things for the benefit of mankind to produce such varieties of food that are so wholesome and so tasty. The Prophet, therefore, rightly demanded: When you yourselves admit, and you cannot but admit, that it is Allah alone Who has provided milk, honey, dates, grapes and the like, He and none but He is worthy of your worship, praise, gratitude and allegiance. Why do you then insist on making offerings to your self made gods and goddesses?

The second doctrine to which the disbelievers took strong objection was that there is surely the life after death. They were against this doctrine for its acceptance changed the whole moral system and they were not prepared to change their immoral ways. Their objection was based on the presumption that it was impossible to bring to life anyone after death.

They have been asked to observe that the barren land, which once had been covered with vegetable life, was again covered with it after rainfall and they have been watching such repetition of life year after year. That Allah, Who could so easily bring to life the dead vegetable, could do the same and bring to life all the dead without any difficulty at all.

وَ اللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمۡ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفّٰىكُمۡ وَ مِنۡكُمۡ مَّنۡ يُّرَدُّ اِلٰۤى اَرۡذَلِ الۡعُمُرِ لِكَيۡ لَا يَعۡلَمَ بَعۡدَ عِلۡمٍ شَيۡـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيۡمٌ قَدِيۡرٌ ۝٧٠

(16-70) Allah has created you, and then He causes you to die. (60) Some of you have your lives prolonged to an abject old age, when one loses all knowledge after having acquired it. (61) Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.

(60) It is to emphasize this: Allah not only provides you with the necessities and good things of life (as stated in the preceding verses), but also has full power over your life and death. None else has any power to give lift or cause death.

(61) This fact has been mentioned to bring home to the disbelievers and the mushriks that knowledge, which gives superiority to man over all creatures on this earth, has been given by Allah, as if to say: You yourselves have seen that when a man, who once possessed much knowledge, becomes very old, he is reduced to a mere lump of flesh. Then that man who once taught knowledge to others loses all his senses and cannot look even after his own self.

وَ اللّٰهُ فَضَّلَ بَعۡضَكُمۡ عَلٰى بَعۡضٍ فِى الرِّزۡقِ ۚ فَمَا الَّذِيۡنَ فُضِّلُوۡا بِرَآدِّىۡ رِزۡقِهِمۡ عَلٰى مَا مَلَكَتۡ اَيۡمَانُهُمۡ فَهُمۡ فِيۡهِ سَوَآءٌ ؕ اَفَبِنِعۡمَةِ اللّٰهِ يَجۡحَدُوۡنَ ۝٧١

(16-71) Allah has favoured some of you with more worldly provisions than others. Then those who are more favoured do not give away their provisions to their slaves lest they become equal sharers in it. Do they, then, deny the favour of Allah? (62)

(62) It will be worthwhile to give deep thought to the meanings of this verse, for some modern commentators of the Quran have founded strange economic theories and systems on it. Their interpretation is an instance of perverting the meaning of the Quran by isolating verses from their context and treating it as a separate whole in order to formulate a new philosophy and law of Islamic Economics. In their opinion the verse implies this: Those people to whom Allah has given more provisions than others, should share these equally with their servants and slaves: otherwise they shall be guilty of ingratitude to Allah in regard to the wealth with which He had blessed them. This commentary on the verse is obviously wrong and farfetched because in the context it occurs there is no mention at all of any law of economics. The whole passage in which this verse occurs deals with the refutation of shirk and proof of Tauhid. The same themes are continued in the subsequent verses. There seems to be no reason why an economic law should have been inserted here, which would have been absolutely irrelevant, to say the least. On the contrary, when the verse is considered in its context, it becomes quite obvious that it is no more than the statement of a fact to prove the same theme that is contained in this passage. It argues like this: When you yourselves do not make your servants and slaves equal partners in your wealth, which in fact is given to you by Allah, how is it that you join other gods with God in your gratitude to Him for the favors with which He has blessed you. You know that these gods have no powers to bestow anything on anyone, and, therefore, have no right in your worship of Allah, for they are after all His slaves and servants.

This interpretation of the verse under discussion is corroborated by (Surah Ar-Rum, Ayat 28): “Allah sets forth to you an instance from your own selves. Do your slaves share with you the wealth We have bestowed on you so that you and they become

equals in this? And do you fear them as you fear one another? Thus We make clear Our signs to those who use their common sense.” A comparison of the two verses makes it quite clear that these have been cited to bring home to the mushriks that they themselves do not associate their slaves with themselves in their wealth and status, but they have the impudence and folly to set up His own creature as partner with God. It appears that the erroneous interpretation has been strengthened by the succeeding sentence: What! do they then deny to acknowledge Allah’s favor? As this sentence immediately follows the similitude of the rich people and their slaves, they conclude that it will be ingratitude on the part of those, who possess more wealth not to share it equally with those who have less. As a matter of fact, everyone who has studied the Quran critically knows that ingratitude to Allah is to show gratitude to others than Allah for His blessings. This interpretation is so patently wrong that those who are well versed in the teachings of the Quran can have no misconception about it. And such verses as these can mislead only those who have a cursory knowledge of the Quran.

Now that the significance of the ingratitude towards Allah’s blessing has become plain, the meaning of the verse will be quite clear, and it is this: When the Mushriks understand the implication of the difference between the master and his slave and observe this distinction in their own lives, why do they then persist in ignoring the immense difference between the Creator and His creatures and set up the latter as His partners and pay homage of gratitude to them for the blessings bestowed on them by Allah.

وَ اللّٰهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمۡ مِّنۡ اَنۡفُسِكُمۡ اَزۡوَاجًا وَّ جَعَلَ لَكُمۡ مِّنۡ اَزۡوَاجِكُمۡ بَنِيۡنَ وَ حَفَدَةً وَّ رَزَقَكُمۡ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ ؕ اَفَبِالۡبَاطِلِ يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ وَ بِنِعۡمَتِ اللّٰهِ هُمۡ يَكۡفُرُوۡنَ ﴿۷۲﴾

(16-72) And Allah has given you spouses from your kind, and has granted you through your spouses, sons and grandsons, and has provided you wholesome things as sustenance. (After knowing all this), do they still believe in falsehood (63) and deny Allah's bounty, (64)

(63) “Is then in falsehood that they believe”: they have this false and baseless belief that there are certain gods and goddesses, jinns and saints, dead and alive, who possess the power to make or mar their fates, fulfill their desires and answer their prayers, give them children, cure their diseases and help them win law suits.

(64) “In the bounty of Allah that they disbelieve”: by associating others with Allah in offering gratitude to Him for His favors, though they did not have any proof or authority that their false gods had played any part in regard to those favors. The Quran considers such an association to be the denial of Allah’s favors. It puts forward the fundamental principle: It is the denial of the favor of the real benefactor to offer gratitude for his favor to anyone who has not done that favor, or to presume without any proof or reason that the real benefactor has nor granted that favor of his own accord but because of the mediation or regard or recommendation or intercession of this or that person.

وَ يَعۡبُدُوۡنَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَمۡلِكُ لَهُمۡ رِزۡقًا مِّنَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ شَيۡـًٔا وَّ لَا يَسۡتَطِيۡعُوۡنَ ﴿۷۳﴾

(16-73) and worship instead of Allah, those helpless beings who have no control over providing them any sustenance from the heavens and the earth; do you worship those who have no power to do anything of this sort?

فَلَا تَضۡرِبُوۡا لِلّٰهِ الۡاَمۡثَالَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعۡلَمُ وَ اَنۡتُمۡ لَا تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۷۴﴾

(16-74) So do not strike any similitudes to Allah.[65] Allah knows whereas you do not know.

(65) "So do not make up any similitude for Allah": You should not compare Allah with others nor consider Him to be unapproachable like worldly kings and rulers, to whom none can have access without the mediation and intercession of their courtiers and servants. As Allah is not surrounded by angels, saints, favorites, etc. everyone can have direct access to Him without mediation by anyone.

ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا عَبۡدًا مَّمۡلُوۡكًا لَّا يَقۡدِرُ عَلٰى شَىۡءٍ وَّمَنۡ رَّزَقۡنٰهُ مِنَّا رِزۡقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنۡفِقُ مِنۡهُ سِرًّا وَّجَهۡرًا ؕ هَلۡ يَسۡتَوٗنَ ؕ اَلۡحَمۡدُ لِلّٰهِ ؕ بَلۡ اَكۡثَرُهُمۡ لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۝٧٥

(16-75) Allah sets forth a parable: [66] There is one who is a slave and is owned by another and has no power over anything; and there is one whom We have granted good provision Ourselves, of which he spends both secretly and openly. Can they be equal? All praise be to Allah. [67] But most of them do not even know (this simple fact). [68]

(66) In the preceding verse, the mushriks were told not to make comparisons between Allah and His creatures, for there is nothing like Him. As the bases of their comparison were wrong, their conclusions were also misleading. In this verse appropriate similitude have been cited and right comparisons have been made to lead them to reality.

(67) Between the last question and "Praise be to Allah" there is a gap which is to be filled with the help of the latter. When the question was posed, obviously the mushriks could not say that the two men were equal. So some of them would have admitted that they were not equal, while the others would have kept quiet for fear that in case of admission, they would have to abide by its logical conclusion, that is, the admission of refutation of the doctrine of shirk. Therefore, the words, "Praise be to Allah" have been put in the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in answer to both kinds of the response to the question. In the first case, it would mean: "Praise be to Allah" you have admitted at

least so much. In the second case, it would mean: “Praise be to Allah” you have kept quiet in spite of all your obduracy and have not had the audacity to say that both were equal.

(68) “But most of them do not know” this simple thing that while they feel and carefully observe the distinction between those who have powers and those who are powerless, they neither feel nor observe the clear distinction between the Creator and His creation. That is why they associate the creatures with the Creator in His Attributes and Powers and show the kind of allegiance to them as is the exclusive right of the Creator. The pity is that in their everyday life, they would beg for some thing from the master of the house and not from the servants but in contrast to this, they would beg for their needs from the servants of Allah and not from Him.

وَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَ ۡنِ اَحَدُهُمَاۤ اَ ۡبۡكَمُ لَا یَ ۡقدِرُ عَلٰی شَیۡءٍ وَّ هُوَ كَلٌّ عَلٰی مَوۡلٰىهُ ۙ اَیۡنَمَا یُوَجِّهۡهُّ
لَا یَاۡتِ بِخَیۡرٍ ؕ هَلۡ یَسۡتَوِیۡ هُوَ ۙ وَ مَنۡ یَّاۡمُرُ بِالۡعَدۡلِ ۙ وَ هُوَ عَلٰی صِرَاطٍ مُّسۡتَقِیۡمٍ ﴿۷۶﴾

(16-76) Allah sets forth another parable: There are two men, one of whom is dumb and has no power over anything; he is a burden to his master, and wheresoever his master directs him, he fails to bring forth any good. Can such a person be the equal (69) of one who enjoins justice and himself follows the Right Way?

(69) In the first similitude, distinction between Allah and false gods has been made clear in regard to the possession of powers and the lack of these. In the second one, the emphasis is on the use of those powers. Allah is not only All Powerful, but also hears all the prayers and fulfills all the needs, while the slave is utterly powerless. He does not and cannot hear prayers, nor can make a response to them nor has the power to do anything at all. He is totally dependent on the Master and quite incapable of doing anything by himself. On the other hand, the Master is All-Powerful and All-Wise. He enjoins justice on the world: whatever He does is right and accurate. Ask them: Is it then a point of wisdom to regard such Master and such a slave as equal?

وَ لِلّٰهِ غَيۡبُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ وَ مَاۤ اَمۡرُ السَّاعَةِ اِلَّا كَلَمۡحِ الۡبَصَرِ اَوۡ هُوَ اَقۡرَبُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ قَدِيۡرٌ ﴿۷۷﴾

(16-77) Allah has full knowledge of the truths beyond the reach of perception both in the heavens and the earth;(70) and the coming of the Hour will take no more than the twinkling of an eye; it may take even less.(71) Indeed Allah has power over everything.

(70) The subsequent sentence shows that this is the answer to a question which was frequently put to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by the disbelievers of Makkah. The question which has not been cited was this: If the Resurrection so often you talk of is really coming, let us know the date of its coming.

(71) That is, don't be under the delusion that the Resurrection will come gradually and take a long time: you will neither be able to see it coming at a distance nor guard against it and make preparations to meet it. For it will come suddenly without any previous notice, in the twinkling of an eye or even will take less time than this. Therefore, now is the time to consider this matter seriously and to decide about your attitude towards it. You should not depend upon this false hope that there is still a long time in the coming of the Resurrection and you will set matters right with Allah when you will see it coming.

It may be pointed out that the Resurrection has been mentioned here during the discussion on Tauhid in order to warn the people that the choice between the doctrines of Tauhid and shirk is not merely a theoretical question. For that choice determines different courses of life for which they will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection. They have also been warned that it will come all of a sudden at some unknown time. Therefore, they should be very careful to make that choice which will determine their success or failure on that Day.

وَ اللّٰهُ اَخۡرَجَكُمۡ مِّنۡۢ بُطُوۡنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمۡ لَا تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ شَيۡـًٔا ۙ وَّ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمۡعَ وَ الۡاَبۡصَارَ وَ
الۡاَفۡـِٕدَةَ ۙ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَشۡكُرُوۡنَ ﴿۷۸﴾

(16-78) Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing, and then gave you hearing, and sight and thinking hearts [72] so that you may give thanks.[73]

(72) This is to remind them that when they were born they were more helpless and ignorant than the young one of an animal, but Allah gave them ears to hear, eyes to see and minds to think and reflect. These have enabled them to acquire every kind of information and knowledge to carry on their worldly affairs efficiently. So much so that these sensory faculties are the only means which help man attain so much progress as to rule over everything on the earth.

(73) That is, you should be grateful to that Allah Who has bestowed upon you such blessings as these. It will be ingratitude on your part if you hear everything with your ears except the word of God, and see everything with your eyes except the signs of Allah and consider seriously about all the matters except your Benefactor Who has blessed you with these favors.

اَلَمۡ یَرَوۡا اِلَی الطَّیۡرِ مُسَخَّرٰتٍ فِیۡ جَوِّ السَّمَآءِ ؕ مَا یُمۡسِکُہُنَّ اِلَّا اللّٰہُ ؕ اِنَّ فِیۡ ذٰلِکَ لَاٰیٰتٍ لِّقَوۡمٍ یُّؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۷۹﴾

(16-79) Have they never noticed the birds how they are held under control in the middle of the sky, where none holds them (from falling) except Allah? Surely there are signs in this for those who believe.

وَ اللّٰہُ جَعَلَ لَکُمۡ مِّنۡۢ بُیُوۡتِکُمۡ سَکَنًا وَّ جَعَلَ لَکُمۡ مِّنۡ جُلُوۡدِ الۡاَنۡعَامِ بُیُوۡتًا تَسۡتَخِفُّوۡنَہَا یَوۡمَ ظَعۡنِکُمۡ وَ یَوۡمَ اِقَامَتِکُمۡ ۙ وَ مِنۡ اَصۡوَافِہَا وَ اَوۡبَارِہَا وَ اَشۡعَارِہَاۤ اَثَاثًا وَّ مَتَاعًا اِلٰی حِیۡنٍ ﴿۸۰﴾

(16-80) Allah has made your houses a repose, and has provided you with the skins of the cattle for your habitation [74] which are light to handle both when you travel and when you camp; [75] and out of their wool and their fur and their hair He has given you furnishings and goods for use over a period of time.

(74) Tents of skin which are in common use in Arabia.

(75) That is, when you want to start on a journey, you can easily fold your tents and carry them, and when you want to make a short halt, you can easily unfold them and pitch them for shelter and rest.

وَ اللّٰہُ جَعَلَ لَکُمۡ مِّمَّا خَلَقَ ظِلٰلًا وَّ جَعَلَ لَکُمۡ مِّنَ الۡجِبَالِ اَکۡنَانًا وَّ جَعَلَ لَکُمۡ سَرَابِیۡلَ تَقِیۡکُمُ الۡحَرَّ وَ سَرَابِیۡلَ تَقِیۡکُمۡ بَاۡسَکُمۡ ؕ کَذٰلِکَ یُتِمُّ نِعۡمَتَہٗ عَلَیۡکُمۡ لَعَلَّکُمۡ تُسۡلِمُوۡنَ ﴿۸۱﴾

(16-81) And Allah has provided shade for you out of some of the things He has created; and He has provided you with shelters in the mountains, and has given you coats that protect you from heat (76) as well as coats that protect you in battle. (77) Thus does He complete His favour upon you (78) that you may submit to Him.

(76) The Quran has not mentioned protection from cold for either of the two reasons:

(1) Because the use of garments in the summer season is a symbol of cultural perfection and obviously there is no need to mention the lower stages of culture. Or

(2) the use of garments in hot countries has specially been mentioned because the main use of garments there is for protection from the hot pestilential furious wind. Therefore, one has to cover one’s head, neck, ears, and the whole of his body to protect it from the hot wind which would otherwise scorch him to death.

(77) That is, Armors.

(78) “Thus does He perfect His favor upon you”: Allah makes provision for the minutest needs and necessities of every aspect of human life. For example, let us take the instance of the protection of the human body from external influences. We find that Allah has made such elaborate arrangements as require a complete book to relate them. These arrangements reach their perfection in the case of clothing and housing arrangement. Or, if we consider the food requirements, we realize that it is of many varieties which fulfill every need. More than this: the means Allah

has provided for food requirements of man are so numerous that the list of the varieties and the names of different kinds of food require a big volume. This is the perfection of the blessing of food. Likewise, one would see perfection of the blessings of Allah in the fulfillment of each and every human need and necessity.

فَاِ ن تَوَلَّوۡا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيۡكَ الۡبَلٰغُ الۡمُبِيۡنُ ﴿۱۶ ۸۲﴾

(16-82) But if they turn away, your only duty is to clearly deliver the message of the truth.

يَعۡرِفُوۡنَ نِعۡمَتَ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يُنۡكِرُوۡنَهَا وَاَكۡثَرُهُمُ الۡكٰفِرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۶ ۸۳﴾

(16-83) They are aware of the favours of Allah, and yet refuse to acknowledge them. (79) Most of them are determined not to accept the Truth.

(79) Here the denial of the blessings of Allah refers to practical denial by the disbelievers of Makkah. For they did not deny that all these blessings were from Allah but along with this they believed that their saints and gods also had contributed towards them. This is why they associated their intercessors in their gratitude to Allah for these blessings. Nay, they were even more grateful to them than to Allah. Allah regards this association as denial of His blessings, ingratitude and forgetfulness of His favors.

وَيَوۡمَ نَبۡعَثُ مِنۡ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ شَهِيۡدًا ثُمَّ لَا يُؤۡذَنُ لِلَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا وَلَا هُمۡ يُسۡتَعۡتَبُوۡنَ ﴿۱۶ ۸۴﴾

(16-84) (They are heedless of) the Day when We shall raise a witness (80) from each community and then the unbelievers will neither be allowed to plead nor will they be asked to repent and seek pardon. (81)

(80) The witness will be the Prophet of that community or his follower who invited that community to Tauhid and God worship and warned it of the consequences of shirk and superstitious rites and customs and cautioned it against the accountability on the

Day of Resurrection. He will bear witness of the fact that he had conveyed the true message to those people, and that they committed evils deliberately and not in ignorance.

(81) This does not mean that the criminals will not be given any opportunity to clear themselves but it means that their crimes will be proved to the hilt by means of irrefutable evidence which will leave no room for excuses.

وَ اِذَا رَاَ الَّذِیۡنَ ظَلَمُوا الۡعَذَابَ فَلَا یُخَفَّفُ عَنۡہُمۡ وَ لَا ہُمۡ یُنۡظَرُوۡنَ ﴿۸۵﴾

(16-85) Once the wrong-doers have beheld the chastisement, (82) neither will it be lightened for them nor will they be granted any respite.

(82) That is, they will not be given the opportunity to beg pardon of their Lord for their crimes. For that will be the time of judgment as the time of begging pardon would have ended long before this. The Quran and the traditions are explicit on this point that the place for penitence is this world and not the next world. Even in this world the opportunity is lost as soon as signs of death begin to appear, for the penitence at that time will be of no avail when a person knows that the time of his death has come. Respite for deeds expires as soon as one enters into the boundary of death, and the only thing that remains after that is the award of reward and punishment.

وَ اِذَا رَاَ الَّذِیۡنَ اَشۡرَکُوۡا شُرَکَآءَہُمۡ قَالُوۡا رَبَّنَا ہٰۤؤُلَآءِ شُرَکَآؤُنَا الَّذِیۡنَ کُنَّا نَدۡعُوۡا مِنۡ دُوۡنِکَ ۚ فَاَلۡقَوۡا اِلَیۡہِمُ الۡقَوۡلَ اِنَّکُمۡ لَکٰذِبُوۡنَ ﴿۸۶﴾

(16-86) And when those who associated others with Allah in His Divinity will see those to whom they ascribed this share, they will say: "Our Lord! These are the beings to whom we ascribed a share in Your Divinity and whom we called upon instead of You," whereupon those beings will fling at them the words: "You are liars." (83)

(83) It does not mean that they would deny the fact that the mushriks used to invoke their help. They will call them liars in the

sense that they had made them deities without their knowledge, information and permission, as if to say: We never told you to leave Allah aside and pray to us for help. As a matter of fact, we never approved of this. Nay, we were utterly unaware of this that you were invoking us. It was an utter lie that you considered us to be able to hear your prayers, answer them and help you out of your difficulties. As you yourselves were responsible for this shirk, why are you involving us in its consequences?

وَ اَ لۡقَوۡا اِلَی اللّٰہِ یَوۡمَئِذِ السَّلَمَ وَ ضَلَّ عَ نۡہُمۡ مَّا کَانُوۡا یَفۡتَرُوۡنَ ﴿۸۷﴾

(16-87) On that Day they will offer their submission and all that they had fabricated will have vanished. (84)

(84) That is, all those things on which they had relied will prove to be false, for they will not find anyone to hear their supplication nor anyone to remove their hardships. Nay, there will be none who will come forward and say: These are my dependents, so no action should be taken against them.

اَلَّذِیۡنَ کَفَرُوۡا وَ صَدُّوۡا عَنۡ سَبِیۡلِ اللّٰہِ زِدۡنٰہُمۡ عَذَابًا فَوۡقَ الۡعَذَابِ بِمَا کَانُوۡا یُفۡسِدُوۡنَ ﴿۸۸﴾

(16-88) As for those who disbelieved and barred others from the way of Allah, We shall add further chastisement (85) to their chastisement for all the mischief they did.

(85) “We will increase punishment over punishment”: one for their own disbelief and the other for hindering others from the Way of Allah.

وَ یَوۡمَ نَبۡعَثُ فِیۡ کُلِّ اُمَّۃٍ شَہِیۡدًا عَلَیۡہِمۡ مِّنۡ اَنۡفُسِہِمۡ وَ جِئۡنَا بِکَ شَہِیۡدًا عَلٰی ہٰۤؤُلَآءِ ؕ وَ نَزَّلۡنَا عَلَیۡکَ الۡکِتٰبَ تِبۡیَانًا لِّکُلِّ شَیۡءٍ وَّ ہُدًی وَّ رَحۡمَۃً وَّ بُشۡرٰی لِلۡمُسۡلِمِیۡنَ ﴿۸۹﴾

(16-89) (O Muhammad), warn them of the coming of a Day when We shall bring forth a witness against them from each community and We shall bring you forth as a witness against them all; (and it is for that purpose that) We sent down the Book to you which makes everything clear, (86) and serves as a guidance and mercy and glad tidings to those who have submitted to Allah. (87)

(86) The Quran makes manifest everything on which depends guidance or deviation, success or failure. Whose knowledge is essential for following the right way. What clearly distinguishes truth from falsehood.

In this connection one should guard against that meaning of this sentence and the like in the Quran according to which some people interpret “everything” to mean the knowledge of all sciences, arts, etc. and in order to prove the correctness of their interpretation, they have to pervert the real meaning of the Quran.

(87) This Book is a guidance for those who surrender to it as a divine Book and follow it in every aspect of life. Then it will bring Allah’s blessings upon them, and will give them the good news that they will come out successful in the court of Allah on the Day of Judgment. Or, the contrary, those people who reject it shall not only be deprived of guidance and blessing but will also find it as a testimony against themselves on the Day of Resurrection when Allah’s Messenger will stand up to testify against them. This Book will prove to be a strong argument against them. For Allah’s Messenger will say that he had conveyed its message which made manifest the distinction between truth and falsehood.

اِنَّ اللّٰہَ یَاۡمُرُ بِالۡعَدۡلِ وَ الۡاِحۡسَانِ وَ اِیۡتَآیِٔ ذِی الۡقُرۡبٰی وَ یَنۡہٰی عَنِ الۡفَحۡشَآءِ وَ الۡمُنۡکَرِ وَ الۡبَغۡیِ ۚ یَعِظُکُمۡ لَعَلَّکُمۡ تَذَکَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۹۰﴾

(16-90) Surely Allah enjoins justice, kindness and the doing of good to kith and kin, (88) and forbids all that is shameful, evil and oppressive. (89) He exhorts you so that you may be mindful.

(88) In this brief sentence Allah has enjoined three most important things on which alone depends the establishment of a sound and healthy society:

The first of these is justice which has two aspects.

To make such arrangements as may enable everyone to get one's due rights without stint. Justice does not, however, mean equal distribution of rights, for that would be absolutely unnatural. In fact, justice means equitable dispensation of rights which in certain cases may mean equality. For example, all citizens should have equal rights of citizenship but in other cases equality in rights would be injustice. For instance, equality in social status and rights between parents and their children will obviously be wrong. Likewise those who render services of superior and inferior types cannot be equal in regard to wages and salaries. What Allah enjoins is that the full rights of everyone should be honestly rendered whether those be moral, social, economic legal or political in accordance with what one justly deserves.

The second thing enjoined is ihsan which has no equivalent in English. This means to be good, generous, sympathetic, tolerant, forgiving, polite, cooperative, selfless, etc. In collective life this is even more important than justice; for justice is the foundation of a sound society but ihsan is its perfection. On the one hand, justice protects society from bitterness and violation of rights. On the other hand, ihsan makes it sweet and joyful and worth living. It is obvious that no society can flourish if every individual insists on exacting his pound of flesh. At best such a society might be free from conflict but there cannot be love, gratitude, generosity, sacrifice, sincerity, sympathy and such humane qualities as produce sweetness in life and develop high values.

The third thing which has been enjoined is good treatment towards one's relatives which in fact is a specific form of ihsan. It means that one should not only treat his relatives well, share their sorrows and pleasures and help them within lawful limits but should also share his wealth with them according to his means and the need of each relative. This enjoins on everyone who possesses ample means to acknowledge the share of his deserving relatives along with the rights of his own person and family. The divine law holds every well to do person in a family to be responsible for fulfilling the needs of all his needy kith and kin. The law considers it a great evil that one person should enjoy the

pleasures of life while his own kith and kin are starving. As it considers the family to be an important part of society, it lays down that the first right of needy individuals is on its well t -do members and then on the others. Likewise it is the first duty of the well to do members of the family to fulfill the needs of their own near relatives and then those of others. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has emphasized this fact in many traditions, according to which a person owes rights to his parents, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, other relatives, etc. in accordance with the nearness of their relationships. On the basis of this fundamental principle, Umar made it obligatory on the first cousins of an orphan to support him. In the case of another orphan he declared that if he had no first cousins he would have made it obligatory on distant cousins to support him. Just imagine the happy condition of the society every unit of which supports its every needy individual in this way. Most surely that society will become high and pure economically, socially and morally.

(89) In contrast to the above mentioned three virtues, Allah prohibits three vices which ruin individuals and the society as a whole:

(1) The Arabic word fahsha applies to all those things that are immodest, immoral or obscene or nasty or dirty or vulgar, not fit to be seen or heard, because they offend against recognized standards of propriety or good taste, e.g. adultery, fornication, homosexuality, nakedness, nudity, theft, robbery, drinking, gambling, begging, abusive language and the like. Likewise it is indecent to indulge in giving publicity to any of these evils and to spread them, e.g. false propaganda, calumny, publicity of crimes, indecent stories, dramas, films, naked pictures, public appearance of womenfolk with indecent makeup, free mixing of sexes, dancing and the like.

(2) Munkar applies to all those evils which have always been universally regarded as evils and have been forbidden by all divine systems of law.

(3) Baghy applies to those vices that transgress the proper limits of decency and violate the rights of others, whether those of the Creator or His creation.

وَ اَ وۡفُوۡا بِعَهۡدِ اللّٰهِ اِذَا عٰهَدۡتُّمۡ وَ لَا تَنۡقُضُوا الۡاَيۡمَانَ بَعۡدَ تَوۡكِيۡدِهَا وَ قَدۡ جَعَلۡتُمُ اللّٰهَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ كَفِيۡلًا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تَفۡعَلُوۡنَ ۹۱

(16-91) And fulfil the covenant which you have made with Allah and do not break your oaths after having firmly made them, and after having made Allah your witness. Surely Allah knows all that you do.

وَ لَا تَكُوۡنُوۡا كَالَّتِىۡ نَقَضَتۡ غَزۡلَهَا مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ قُوَّةٍ اَنۡكَاثًا ؕ تَتَّخِذُوۡنَ اَيۡمَانَكُمۡ دَخَلًا ۢ بَيۡنَكُمۡ اَنۡ تَكُوۡنَ اُمَّةٌ هِىَ اَرۡبٰى مِنۡ اُمَّةٍ ؕ اِنَّمَا يَبۡلُوۡكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِهٖ ؕ وَ لَيُبَيِّنَنَّ لَكُمۡ يَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ مَا كُنۡتُمۡ فِيۡهِ تَخۡتَلِفُوۡنَ ۹۲

(16-92) And do not become like the woman who, after having painstakingly spun her yarn, caused it to disintegrate into pieces. (90) You resort to oaths as instruments of mutual deceit so that one people might take greater advantage than another although Allah puts you to the test through this. (91) Surely on the Day of Resurrection (92) He will make clear the Truth concerning the matters over which you differed.

(90) In this verse, Allah has enjoined three kinds of covenants which have been mentioned in the order of their importance. The first of these covenants is the one between man and his Allah which is the most important of all. The second in importance is the covenant between one man or one group of men and another man or another group of men, which is taken with Allah as a witness or in which the name of God has been used. The third covenant is that which has been made without using Allah's name. Though this is third in importance, its fulfillment is as important as that of the first two and the violation of any of these has been prohibited.

(91) In this connection it should be noted that Allah has rebuked the people for the worst form of violation of treaties which has been creating the greatest disorder in the world. It is a pity that even big people consider it to be a virtue to violate treaties in order to gain advantages for their people in political,

economic and religious conflicts. At one time the leader of one nation enters into a treaty with another nation for the interest of his own people but at another time the same leader publicly breaks the very same treaty for the interest of his people, or secretly violates it. It is an irony that such violations are made even by those people who are honest in their private lives. Moreover, it is regrettable that their own people do not protest against them; nay, they eulogize them for such shameful feats of diplomacy. Therefore, Allah warns that every such treaty is a test of the character of those who enter into it, and of their nations. They might gain some apparent advantage for their people in this way, but they will not escape their consequences on the Day of Judgment.

(92) This is to warn that decision about differences and disputes that lead to conflict will be made on the Day of Judgment. Therefore, these should not be made an excuse to break agreements and treaties. Even if one is wholly in the right and the opponent is wholly in the wrong. It is not right for the former to break treaties or make false propaganda or employ other deceitful methods to defeat the other. If one does so, it will go against him on that Day because righteousness demands that one should not only be right in his theories and aims but should also use right methods and employ right means. This warning has especially been given to those religious groups and sects who always suffer from this misunderstanding that they have a right to defeat their opponents because they are on the side of God and their opponents are rebels against Allah. Therefore, there is no obligation on them to stick to their treaties with their opponents. This was what the Arab Jews practiced, declaring: There is no moral obligation on us in regard to the pagan Arabs, and we are rightly entitled to practice dishonesty and deceit that might be of advantage to us and harmful to the disbelievers.

وَلَوۡ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمۡ أُمَّةٗ وَٰحِدَةٗ وَلَٰكِن يُضِلُّ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَهۡدِي مَن يَشَآءُۚ وَلَتُسۡـَٔلُنَّ عَمَّا كُنتُمۡ تَعۡمَلُونَ ٩٣

(16-93) Had Allah so willed, He would have made you all one single community. (93) However, He lets go astray

whomsoever He wills and shows the Right Way to whomsoever He wills. (94) Surely you shall be called to account regarding what you did.

(93) This further supports the previous warning. It means that it would be wrong for any champion of Allah's religion to arrogate to himself the use of every sort of method and means irrespective of whether they are right or wrong to propagate his own religion (considering it to be Allah's religion) and try to destroy opposite religions. For this would be utterly against the will of Allah. If Allah had willed that there should be no religious differences, He could have deprived mankind of the freedom of choice. In that case, there would have been no need for Allah to get help of any such upholder of His religion, who uses disgraceful means for this purpose. Allah could have created all mankind to be inherent believers and obedient servants by depriving them of the power and option of disbelief and sin. Then there would have been none who could have dared to deviate from belief and obedience.

(94) This is to show that Allah Himself has given man the power and freedom to follow any out of the many ways. That is why Allah makes arrangements for the guidance of the one who intends to follow the right way, and let go astray the one who desires to deviate.

وَ لَا تَتَّخِذُوۡۤا اَیۡمَانَکُمۡ دَخَلًۢا بَیۡنَکُمۡ فَتَزِلَّ قَدَمٌۢ بَعۡدَ ثُبُوۡتِہَا وَ تَذُوۡقُوا السُّوۡٓءَ بِمَا صَدَدۡتُّمۡ عَنۡ سَبِیۡلِ اللّٰہِ ۚ وَ لَکُمۡ عَذَابٌ عَظِیۡمٌ ﴿۹۴﴾

(16-94) Do not make your oaths a means of deceiving one another or else your foot may slip after having been firm, (95) and you may suffer evil consequences because of hindering people from the way of Allah. A mighty chastisement awaits you.

(95) That is, someone who might have been convinced of Islam, seeing your dishonest conduct should become disgusted and hold back from joining the believers. For he might argue like this: As these Muslims are not much different from the disbelievers in their morals and dealings, there is no reason why I should join them.

وَ لَا تَشۡتَرُوۡا بِعَهۡدِ اللّٰهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيۡلًا ؕ اِنَّمَا عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ خَيۡرٌ لَّكُمۡ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۹۵﴾

(16-95) Do not barter away the covenant [96] of Allah for a paltry gain. [97] Verily that which is with Allah is far better for you, if you only knew.

(96) That is, the covenant that you may make in the name of Allah as a representative of His religion.

(97) It does not mean that they should barter away Allah's covenant for some big gain. What it implies is that any worldly gain howsoever great is insignificant as compared with the worth of Allah's covenant. Therefore, it will be a losing bargain to barter that away for any worldly gain, which is after all paltry.

مَا عِنۡدَكُمۡ يَنۡفَدُ ۚ وَ مَا عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ بَاقٍ ؕ وَ لَنَجۡزِيَنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ صَبَرُوۡۤا اَجۡرَهُمۡ بِاَحۡسَنِ مَا كَانُوۡا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۹۶﴾

(16-96) Whatever you have is bound to pass away and whatever is with Allah will last. And We shall surely grant those who have been patient their reward [98] according to the best of what they did.

(98) Those who practice fortitude are the people who will always stand firm in the struggle between right and truth on one side and greed and lust on the other. They bear every loss for the sake of righteousness and spurn away every gain that they might obtain by adopting unlawful means. They patiently wait for the rewards of their good deeds in the Hereafter.

مَنۡ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنۡ ذَكَرٍ اَوۡ اُنۡثٰى وَ هُوَ مُؤۡمِنٌ فَلَنُحۡيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ وَ لَنَجۡزِيَنَّهُمۡ اَجۡرَهُمۡ بِاَحۡسَنِ مَا كَانُوۡا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۹۷﴾

(16-97) Whosoever acts righteously - whether a man or a woman - and embraces belief, We will surely grant him a good

life; [99] and will surely grant such persons their reward according to the best of their deeds. [100]

(99) This verse removes the wrong notions of both the Muslims and the disbelievers who are of the opinion that those who adopt a just honest and pious attitude, are most surely losers in this world, though they might be gainers in the Hereafter. Allah removes this misunderstanding, as if to say: This presumption of yours is wrong. The righteous attitude not only leads to a happy life in the Hereafter, but it also guarantees, by Allah's grace, a pure and happy life even in this world. And this is a fact that those people who are sincerely righteous, honest, pure and fair in their dealings enjoy a much better life in this world. For they enjoy that confidence and real honor and respect because of their spotless character, which is not enjoyed by those who lack these virtues. They obtain such pure and outstanding success as are denied to those who employ dirty and disgusting ways to win success. Above all, they enjoy, even though they might be living in poor houses, that peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which is denied to the wicked dwellers of mansions and palaces.

(100) That is, their rank in the Hereafter shall be determined according to their best deeds. In other words, if a person has done both small and great virtues, he will be awarded that high rank which he would merit according to his greatest virtues.

فَاِذَا قَرَاۡتَ الۡقُرۡاٰنَ فَاسۡتَعِذۡ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيۡطٰنِ الرَّجِيۡمِ ۹۸

(16-98) Whenever you read the Qur'an seek refuge with Allah from Satan, the accursed. (101)

(101) This does not mean that one should merely repeat the Arabic words: I seek Allah's refuge against the accursed Satan. It means that one should have a sincere desire and do his utmost to guard against Satan's evil suggestions when one is reciting the Holy Quran and should not allow wrong and irrelevant doubts and suspicions to enter his mind. One should try to see everything contained in the Quran in its true light, and refrain from mixing it up with his self invented theories or ideas foreign to the Quran so as to construe its meaning against the will of Allah. Moreover, one should feel that the most sinister and avowed design of Satan is that the reader should not obtain any guidance from the Quran. This is why Satan tries his utmost to delude the reader and pervert him from getting guidance from it, and mislead him into wrong ways of thinking. Therefore, the reader should be fully on his guard against Satan and seek Allah's refuge for help so that Satan should not be able to deprive him of the benefits froth this source of guidance, for one who fails to get guidance from this source, will never be able to get guidance from anywhere else. Above all, the one who seeks to obtain deviation from this Book is so entangled in deviation that he can never get out of this vicious circle.

The context in which this verse occurs here is to serve as an introduction to the answers to the questions which the mushriks of Makkah were raising against the Quran. They have been warned that they could appreciate the blessing of the Quran only if they would try to see it in its true light by seeking Allah's protection against Satan's misleading suggestions, and not by raising objections against it. Otherwise Satan does not let a man understand the Quran and its teachings.

اِنَّهٗ لَيۡسَ لَهٗ سُلۡطٰنٌ عَلَى الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَعَلٰى رَبِّهِمۡ يَتَوَكَّلُوۡنَ ۹۹

(16-99) Surely he has no power over those who have faith and who place their trust in their Lord.

اِنَّمَا سُلۡطٰنُهٗ عَلَى الَّذِيۡنَ يَتَوَلَّوۡنَهٗ وَ الَّذِيۡنَ هُمۡ بِهٖ مُشۡرِكُوۡنَ ۝١٠٠

(16-100) He has power only over those who take him as their patron and who, under his influence, associate others with Allah in His Divinity.

وَ اِذَا بَدَّلۡنَاۤ اٰيَةً مَّكَانَ اٰيَةٍ ۙ وَّ اللّٰهُ اَعۡلَمُ بِمَا يُنَزِّلُ قَالُوۡۤا اِنَّمَاۤ اَنۡتَ مُفۡتَرٍ ؕ بَلۡ اَكۡثَرُهُمۡ لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۝١٠١

(16-101) Whenever We replace one verse by another verse - and Allah knows what He should reveal - they are wont to say: "You are nothing but a fabricator (102) (who has invented the Quran)." The fact is that most of them are ignorant of the Truth.

(102) This may also mean: To send down one commandment to elaborate upon the other, for the commandments were sent down piecemeal in the Quran. For instance, the commandments about prohibition and fornication were sent down gradually one after the other during several years. But We hesitate to accept this interpretation because An-Nahl is a Makki Surah and to the best of our information there is no instance to show that commandments were sent down piecemeal at Makkah. Therefore, we prefer the other interpretation. The Quran has added details of one theme and explained the same with different kinds of illustrations at different places. Likewise it has related a story in different words at different places and presented its different aspects and details at other places. It has put forward one argument at one place to prove a theme and another at another place to prove the same theme. It has related one theme concisely at one place and in detail at the other. That is what the disbelievers of Makkah put forward as proof that Muhammad (peace be upon him) forged the Quran himself. They argued like this: Had the Quran been the Word of Allah, it would have related one thing in full at one place, for Allah’s knowledge is not defective that He should have to think out gradually the details of

a theme and to give different versions to explain the same thing. In contrast to this, the knowledge of a human being is defective. A man has to think out gradually as has been done in the case of the Quran which is a clear proof that you have forged it yourself.

قُلۡ نَزَّلَهٗ رُوۡحُ الۡقُدُسِ مِنۡ رَّبِّكَ بِالۡحَقِّ لِيُثَبِّتَ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَهُدًى وَّبُشۡرٰى لِلۡمُسۡلِمِيۡنَ ١٠٢

(16-102) Tell them: "It is the spirit of holiness that has brought it down, by stages, (103) from your Lord so that it might bring firmness to those who believe, (104) and guidance to the Right Way, (105) and give glad tidings of felicity and success to those who submit to Allah." (106)

(103) The Holy Spirit: Gibril. Instead of using the name of the angel who brought revelation, his title has been deliberately mentioned to warn the disbelievers that the Holy Spirit who brought revelation is free from human frailties. He is neither dishonest that he should add something to or take away something from the message he brought, nor is he a liar and forger that he should invent and state something in the name of Allah. Nor does he suffer from any human lust that he should practice a deceit. He is wholly pure and holy and conveys the Word of Allah intact.

(104) That is, the fact that Allah sends down His message piecemeal does not mean that Allah’s knowledge and wisdom are defective as you consider because of your folly. Allah sends His revelations gradually because human intelligence and capacity to grasp are limited and defective which do not let him understand the whole theme at one and the same time and make it firm in his mind. Therefore, Allah in His wisdom conveyed His revelation piecemeal through the Holy Spirit. He sends a theme gradually and gives its details by and by and uses different methods and ways to make it plain to human beings so that they might grasp it according to their abilities and capabilities and become firm in their faith and knowledge.

(105) The second practical wisdom of sending down the Quran piecemeal was that those believers who obediently followed it, should get necessary instructions for the propagation of Islam and the solution of other problems of life at the time when they were actually needed. It is obvious that if those instructions had been sent down before time and at one and the same time they would not have been useful.

(106) The third practical wisdom of not sending down the Quran as a whole at one and the same time was to give good tidings and encouragement to the obedient servants who were suffering from persecution and encountering great obstacles because they needed it over and over again. That is why they were assured of ultimate success time and again to fill them with hope to carry on their mission.

وَ لَقَدۡ نَعۡلَمُ اَنَّہُمۡ یَقُوۡلُوۡنَ اِنَّمَا یُعَلِّمُہٗ بَشَرٌ ؕ لِسَانُ الَّذِیۡ یُلۡحِدُوۡنَ اِلَیۡہِ اَعۡجَمِیٌّ وَّ ہٰذَا لِسَانٌ عَرَبِیٌّ مُّبِیۡنٌ ﴿۱۰۳﴾

(16-103) Surely We know well that they say about you: "It is only a human being who teaches him,"
(107) (notwithstanding) that he whom they maliciously hint at is of foreign tongue, while this (Quran) is plain Arabic speech.

(107) In this connection, traditions mention the names of several persons, one of whom is Jabar. According to the disbelievers of Makkah he taught the Prophet (peace be upon him). However, one thing particularly noteworthy about all these persons is that they were non Arab slaves. Whosoever he might be, the fact that he used to recite the Torah and the Gospel and had an acquaintance with the Prophet (peace be upon him). This gave an opportunity to the disbelievers for spreading this false report that it was the particular slave who was the real author of the Holy Quran, but Muhammad (peace be upon him) presented it as the Word of God. This not only shows that his opponents were very impudent in spreading false accusations against the Prophet (peace be upon him) but also that, in general, people are not just in judging the worth of their contemporaries. They were ill treating like this that great personality who has had no parallel in

history. Nevertheless, these people who had become blind in their opposition, preferred to attribute the authorship of the matchless Arabic Quran to a non Arab slave who had a smattering of the Torah and the Gospel. Instead of accepting the claim of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who was an embodiment of truth, they attributed its authorship to an insignificant foreign slave.

اِنَّ الَّذِیۡنَ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِاٰیٰتِ اللّٰہِ ۙ لَا یَہۡدِیۡہِمُ اللّٰہُ وَ لَہُمۡ عَذَابٌ اَلِیۡمٌ ﴿۱۶:۱۰۴﴾

(16-104) Surely Allah will not enable those who do not believe in the signs of Allah to be directed to the Right Way, and a painful chastisement awaits them.

اِنَّمَا یَفۡتَرِی الۡکَذِبَ الَّذِیۡنَ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ بِاٰیٰتِ اللّٰہِ ۚ وَ اُولٰٓئِکَ ہُمُ الۡکٰذِبُوۡنَ ﴿۱۶:۱۰۵﴾

(16-105) (It is not the Prophet who invents lies), it is rather those who do not believe in the signs of Allah who invent lies. (108) They are liars.

(108) This verse can also be rendered like this: A Prophet does not forge any false thing but those, who do not believe in the revelations of Allah, invent falsehoods.

مَنۡ کَفَرَ بِاللّٰہِ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ اِیۡمَانِہٖۤ اِلَّا مَنۡ اُکۡرِہَ وَ قَلۡبُہٗ مُطۡمَئِنٌّۢ بِالۡاِیۡمَانِ وَ لٰکِنۡ مَّنۡ شَرَحَ بِالۡکُفۡرِ صَدۡرًا فَعَلَیۡہِمۡ غَضَبٌ مِّنَ اللّٰہِ ۚ وَ لَہُمۡ عَذَابٌ عَظِیۡمٌ ﴿۱۶:۱۰۶﴾

(16-106) Except for those who were forced to engage in infidelity to Allah after believing the while their hearts remained firmly convinced of their belief, the ones whose hearts willingly embraced disbelief shall incur Allah's wrath and a mighty chastisement lies in store for them. (109)

(109) This verse deals with the case of those Muslims who were being persecuted with cruelty and were being subjected to unbearable torments to force them to give up their faith. They are being told that if at any time they are forced to utter words of disbelief to save their lives, when in fact in their hearts they are secure against disbelief, they will be pardoned. On the other

hand, if they accepted unbelief from the core of their hearts, they shall not escape the torment of Allah even if they succeed in saving their lives.

It does not, however, mean that one should utter words of disbelief to save his life. This is merely a permission but not the ideal thing for a believer. According to this permission if one utters such a thing, he shall not be taken to account. In fact, the ideal for a believer is to utter words of truth in any case whether his body is cut into pieces. There are instances which show that during the period of the Prophet (peace be upon him) some acted upon the ideal while others took advantage of the permission. There was Khabbab bin Art (may Allah be pleased with him) who was made to lie on embers of fire until the fire was extinguished by the melting of his fat, but he remained firm in his faith. Then there was Bilal Habashi who was made to put on an armor and stand in the scorching heat. Then he was dragged on the burning sand but he went on saying, Allah is one. There was another believer, Habib Gin Zaid bin Asim, whose limbs were cut one by one by the order of Musailimah, the Liar. Each time his limb was severed it was demanded of him that he should acknowledge the Liar as a prophet but each time he refused to bear witness to his claim of prophethood until he breathed his last. On the other hand, there was the instance of Ammar bin Yasir whose parents were mercilessly butchered before his eyes. After this he himself was put to such unbearable torture that, in order to save his life, he had to utter the same words of unbelief that were demanded of him. Afterwards when he came crying to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said: O Messenger of Allah, they did not let me go until I spoke evil of you and praised their deities. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: How do you feel about this, in your heart? He replied humbly: My heart is fully convinced of the faith. At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: If they put you to the same torture again, you may utter the same words. May Allah be pleased with them all.

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ ۙ مُ اسۡتَحَبُّواالۡحَيٰوةَ الدُّنۡيَا عَلَى الۡاٰخِرَةِ ۙ وَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهۡدِى الۡقَوۡمَ الۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ ﴿۱۰۷﴾

(16-107) That is because they love the life of this world more than the Hereafter; and Allah does not guide those who are ungrateful to Allah for His favours.

اُولٰٓئِکَ الَّذِیۡنَ طَبَعَ اللّٰہُ عَلٰی قُلُوۡبِہِمۡ وَ سَمۡعِہِمۡ وَ اَبۡصَارِہِمۡ ؕ وَ اُولٰٓئِکَ ہُمُ الۡغٰفِلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰۸﴾

(16-108) They are the ones upon whose hearts and hearing and eyes Allah has set a seal. They are utterly steeped in heedlessness.

لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّہُمۡ فِی الۡاٰخِرَۃِ ہُمُ الۡخٰسِرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰۹﴾

(16-109) No doubt they shall be losers in the Hereafter. (110)

(110) These words apply to those people who gave up their faith, when they felt that they could not bear hardships of the right way and so they again joined their unbelieving, mushrik people.

ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ لِلَّذِیۡنَ ہَاجَرُوۡا مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ مَا فُتِنُوۡا ثُمَّ جٰہَدُوۡا وَ صَبَرُوۡۤا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّکَ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِہَا لَغَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِیۡمٌ ﴿۱۱۰﴾ ٪

(16-110) And surely your Lord will be Most Forgiving and Most Merciful towards those who left their homes after they were persecuted, and who thereafter struggled hard and remained constant. (111)

(111) They were those believers who migrated to Habashah.

یَوۡمَ تَاۡتِیۡ کُلُّ نَفۡسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَنۡ نَّفۡسِہَا وَ تُوَفّٰی کُلُّ نَفۡسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتۡ وَ ہُمۡ لَا یُظۡلَمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۱﴾

(16-111) Allah's judgement will come about them all on the Day when everyone shall come pleading in his defence, and everyone shall be fully requited for his deeds and none shall be wronged in the least.

وَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰ مَثَلًا قَرۡیَۃً کَانَتۡ اٰمِنَۃً مُّطۡمَئِنَّۃً یَّاۡتِیۡہَا رِزۡقُہَا رَغَدًا مِّنۡ کُلِّ مَکَانٍ فَکَفَرَتۡ بِاَنۡعُمِ اللّٰہِ فَاَذَاقَہَا اللّٰہُ لِبَاسَ الۡجُوۡعِ وَ الۡخَوۡفِ بِمَا کَانُوۡا یَصۡنَعُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۲﴾

(16-112) Allah sets forth the parable of (the people of) a town who were secure and content and whose sustenance came in abundance from every quarter. But then the people of the town showed ingratitude towards Allah for His bounties, so Allah afflicted them with hunger and fear in punishment for their evil deeds.

وَ لَقَدۡ جَآءَہُمۡ رَسُوۡلٌ مِّنۡہُمۡ فَکَذَّبُوۡہُ فَاَخَذَہُمُ الۡعَذَابُ وَ ہُمۡ ظٰلِمُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۳﴾

(16-113) Most certainly a Messenger came to them from among them; but they rejected him, calling him a liar. Therefore chastisement seized them while they engaged in wrong-doing. (112)

(112) That habitation has not been specified here nor have the commentators definitely pointed out which that habitation was. However, there is a saying of Ibn Abbas (which seems to be correct) that the place referred to is Makkah itself. In that case, hunger and fear will mean the famine which prevailed over the people of Makkah for several years during the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

فَکُلُوۡا مِمَّا رَزَقَکُمُ اللّٰہُ حَلٰلًا طَیِّبًا ۪ وَّ اشۡکُرُوۡا نِعۡمَتَ اللّٰہِ اِنۡ کُنۡتُمۡ اِیَّاہُ تَعۡبُدُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۴﴾

(16-114) So eat out of the lawful and good sustenance that Allah has bestowed upon you, and thank Allah for His bounty, (113) if it is Him that you serve. (114)

(113) This shows that the above mentioned famine had come to an end at the time of the revelation of this Surah.

(114) Here the observation of the lawful and the unlawful has been made the test of worship of Allah. Those who claim to be the servants of Allah will eat what is lawful and pure and show gratitude to Him and will scrupulously refrain from what is forbidden and impure.

اِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيۡكُمُ الۡمَيۡتَةَ وَ الدَّمَ وَ لَحۡمَ الۡخِنۡزِيۡرِ وَ مَاۤ اُهِلَّ لِغَيۡرِ اللّٰهِ بِهٖ ۚ فَمَنِ اضۡطُرَّ
غَيۡرَ بَاغٍ وَّ لَا عَادٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ﴿۱۱۵﴾

(16-115) Allah has forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine; also any animal over which the name of any other than Allah has been pronounced. But whoever eats of them under compelling necessity - neither desiring it nor exceeding the limit of absolute necessity - surely for such action Allah is Much Forgiving, Most Merciful. (115)

(115) Please refer also to (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 173), (Surah Al-Maidah, Ayat 3) and (Surah Al-Anam, Ayat 145).

وَ لَا تَقُوۡلُوۡا لِمَا تَصِفُ اَلۡسِنَتُكُمُ الۡكَذِبَ هٰذَا حَلٰلٌ وَّ هٰذَا حَرَامٌ لِّتَفۡتَرُوۡا عَلَى اللّٰهِ الۡكَذِبَ ؕ
اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ يَفۡتَرُوۡنَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ الۡكَذِبَ لَا يُفۡلِحُوۡنَ ﴿۱۱۶﴾

(16-116) And do not utter falsehoods by letting your tongues declare: "This is lawful" (116) and "That is unlawful," thus fabricating lies against Allah. Surely those who fabricate lies against Allah will never prosper.

(116) This verse clearly shows that none but Allah has the right to declare a thing to be lawful or unlawful. Or, in other words, the right of making laws exclusively rests with Allah. Therefore, any person who will dare to decide about the lawful and the unlawful will transgress his powers. Of course, a person, who acknowledges the divine law as the final authority, may deduce from it whether a certain thing or action is lawful or unlawful.

The arrogation of the right of determining the lawful and the unlawful has been declared to be a falsehood on Allah for two reasons:

(1) Such a person, so to say, claims that what he declares to be lawful or unlawful, disregarding the authority of the divine Book, has been made lawful or unlawful by God.

(2) He means to claim that Allah has given up the authority of making lawful and unlawful and has thus left man

free to make his own laws for the conduct of life. It is obvious that each of these claims will be a falsehood and a false imputation to Allah.

مَتَاعٌ قَلِيلٌ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١٧﴾

(16-117) Brief is their enjoyment of the world, and thereafter they shall suffer a painful chastisement.

وَعَلَى الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا حَرَّمْنَا مَا قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾

(16-118) We have already recounted to you (118) what We prohibited (117) to the Jews. In so doing We did not wrong them; it is they who wronged themselves.

(118) This refers to: “And We prohibited all animals with claws to those people who had adopted Judaism.” (Surah Al-Anam, Ayat 146). In this (Verse 118) Allah has stated that certain things were made unlawful because of the disobedience of the Jews.

Here a question arises. Which of the two Surahs, Al-Anaam or An-Nahl, was first revealed? This is because in (Verse 118), a reference has been made to (Verse 146 of Al-Anam). Also in (Verse 119 of Al-Anam): “And why should you not eat that thing over which Allah’s name has been mentioned, when He has already given you a detail of those things that have been declared to be unlawful for you except in case of extremity?” a reference has been made to (Verse 115 of An- Nahl).
This is because these are the only two Makki Surahs in which details of unlawful things have been given. As regards to the question, we are of the opinion that An-Nahl was revealed earlier than Al-Anaam, for (Verse 119)of the latter contains a reference to(Verse 115) of the former. It appears that after the revelation of Surah Al-Anaam, the disbelievers raised objections in regard to these verses of An-Nahl. So they were referred to (Verse 146 of Al-Anaam) in which a few things were made unlawful, especially for the Jews. As this answer concerned An-Nahl, so (Verse 118), though

it was revealed after the revelation of Al-Anam, was inserted as a parenthetical clause in An-Nahl.

(119) “Abraham was a whole community by himself” for at that time he was the only Muslim in the whole world who was upholding the banner of Islam, while the rest of the world was upholding the banner of unbelief. As that servant of Allah performed the mission which is ordinarily carried out by a whole community, he was not one person but an institution in himself.

ثُمَّ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لِلَّذِيۡنَ عَمِلُوا السُّوۡٓءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابُوۡا مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ ذٰلِكَ وَاَصۡلَحُوۡۤا ۙ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِهَا لَغَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ﴿۱۱۹﴾

(16-119) But to those who commit evil out of ignorance and then repent and amend their ways, thereafter your Lord will be Much Forgiving, Most Merciful.

اِنَّ اِبۡرٰهِيۡمَ كَانَ اُمَّةً قَانِتًا لِّلّٰهِ حَنِيۡفًا ؕ وَلَمۡ يَكُ مِنَ الۡمُشۡرِكِيۡنَ ﴿۱۲۰﴾

(16-120) Indeed Abraham was a whole community by himself, (119) obedient to Allah, exclusively devoted to Him. And he was never one of those who associated others with Allah in His Divinity.

(119) “Abraham was a whole community by himself” for at that time he was the only Muslim in the whole world who was upholding the banner of Islam, while the rest of the world was upholding the banner of unbelief. As that servant of Allah performed the mission which is ordinarily carried out by a whole community, he was not one person but an institution in himself.

شَاكِرًا لِّاَنۡعُمِهِ ؕ اِجۡتَبٰىهُ وَهَدٰىهُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسۡتَقِيۡمٍ ﴿۱۲۱﴾

(16-121) He rendered thanks to Allah for His bounties so that Allah chose him (for His favours) and directed him to the Right Way.

وَاٰتَيۡنٰهُ فِى الدُّنۡيَا حَسَنَةً ؕ وَاِنَّهٗ فِى الۡاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصّٰلِحِيۡنَ ﴿۱۲۲﴾

(16-122) We bestowed good upon him in this world, and in the Hereafter he shall certainly be among the righteous.

ثُمَّ لَوۡ حَيۡنَا اِلَيۡكَ اَنِ اتَّبِعۡ مِلَّةَ اِبۡرٰهِيۡمَ حَنِيۡفًا ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ مِنَ الۡمُشۡرِكِيۡنَ۱۲۳

(16-123) Then We revealed to you: "Follow the way of Abraham with exclusive devotion to Allah. He was not one of those who associated others (120) with Allah in His Divinity."

(120) This is the complete answer to the first objection (E.N. 117) raised by the disbelievers. This has two parts.

(1) There is no contradiction in the divine law as you seem to presume on the apparent variance in the Jewish and the Islamic Law. As a matter of fact a few things had been made unlawful especially for the Jews as punishment to them because of their disobedience; therefore, there was no reason why others should be deprived of those good things.

(2) Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was commanded to follow the way of Abraham and not the way of the Jews, and they themselves knew that these things were not unlawful in the law of Abraham. For instance, the Jews did not eat the flesh of camel but this was lawful according to Abraham. Likewise, ostrich, hare, duck, etc. were unlawful in the Jewish law, but they were lawful according to Abraham. Incidentally the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned that neither they nor the Jews had any relationship with Prophet Abraham for he was not a mushrik while both of them were practicing shirk. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers were the only true followers of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) for there was no tinge of shirk in their creed or in their practice.

اِنَّمَا جُعِلَ السَّبۡتُ عَلَى الَّذِيۡنَ اخۡتَلَفُوۡا فِيۡهِ ؕ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَحۡكُمُ بَيۡنَهُمۡ يَوۡمَ الۡقِيٰمَةِ فِيۡمَا كَانُوۡا فِيۡهِ يَخۡتَلِفُوۡنَ۱۲۴

(16-124) As for the Sabbath, it was made incumbent only on those who differed about its laws. (121) Certainly your Lord will judge on the Day of Resurrection between them regarding the matters they disputed.

(121) This is the answer to their second objection. Obviously, there was no need to state that the restrictions about the Sabbath applied only to the Jews and had nothing to do with the law of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), because they themselves knew it. The restrictions were imposed upon the Jews because of their mischief and violations of the law. In order to understand fully the significance of this reference one is requested to read those passages of the Bible in which commandments about the Sabbath have been stated, e.g., Exodus 20: 8-11, 23: 12-13,31: 1-17, 35: 23, and Numbers 15: 32-36. Besides this, one should also be acquainted with the impudent violations of the Sabbath. See Jeremiah: 17: 21-27 and Ezekiel. 10: 18-24.

ٱدۡعُ إِلَىٰ سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِٱلۡحِكۡمَةِ وَٱلۡمَوۡعِظَةِ ٱلۡحَسَنَةِ وَجَٰدِلۡهُم بِٱلَّتِي هِيَ أَحۡسَنُۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعۡلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَن سَبِيلِهِۦ وَهُوَ أَعۡلَمُ بِٱلۡمُهۡتَدِينَ ١٢٥

(16-125) (O Prophet), call to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, (122) and reason with them in the best manner possible. (123) Surely your Lord knows best who has strayed away from His path, and He also knows well those who are guided to the Right Way.

(122) This instruction is very important for those who are engaged in the propagation of Islam. They should always keep in view two things, wisdom and excellent admonition. Wisdom implies that one should use discretion in the work of propagation and should not do this blindly like foolish people. Wisdom demands that one should keep in view the intelligence, capability and circumstances of the addressees and convey the message in accordance with the requirements of the occasion. Moreover, one should refrain from applying one and the same method to each and every person or group but should first diagnose the real disease of the addressee and then cure it by appealing to his mind and intellect.

Excellent admonition implies two things:

(1) One should not be content with convincing the addressee with arguments alone but should also appeal to his feelings. Likewise one should not confine himself merely to arguments in condemning evils and deviations but should try to convince the other of their repugnance that lies embedded in the human nature. One should also warn of the worst consequences of those evils. Besides, one should not only try to convince the addressee rationally of the soundness and excellence of guidance and righteous deeds but should also create in him interest and love for them.

(2) Admonition should be administered in such a manner as to show sincere concern for and the welfare of the addressee. Nothing should be said or done to create the impression that the admonisher is looking down upon him and taking pleasure in his own feeling of superiority. On the contrary, he should feel that the admonisher is filled with the strong desire for his reform and welfare.

(123) "In a way that is better" implies that one should have a sweet tongue, show noble character and give reasonable and appealing arguments, and refrain from indulging in polemics, argumentation and controversies. The one who discusses things with people in the best manner, does not resort to accusations, crooked arguments, taunts, nor makes fun of the opponent in order to defeat him and to win applause for his own superiority in argument. For these things will produce obduracy and obstinacy. In contrast to this, he will try to convince the other in a simple and humble way, and when he feels that the other person has come down to crooked arguments, he will leave him alone lest the other should go further and further astray in his deviation.

وَ اِنۡ عَاقَبۡتُمۡ فَعَاقِبُوۡا بِمِثۡلِ مَا عُوۡقِبۡتُمۡ بِهٖ ؕ وَ لَئِنۡ صَبَرۡتُمۡ لَهُوَ خَيۡرٌ لِّلصّٰبِرِيۡنَ ﴿۱۲۶﴾

(16-126) If you take retribution, then do so in proportion to the wrong done to you. But if you can bear such conduct with patience, indeed that is best for the steadfast.

وَصۡبۡرُكَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَ لَا تَحۡزَنۡ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَ لَا تَكُ فِىۡ ضَيۡقٍ مِّمَّا يَمۡكُرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۷﴾

(16-127) And bear with patience, (O Muhammad) - and your patience is only because of the help of Allah - and do not grieve over them, nor feel distressed by their evil plans.

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَ الَّذِيۡنَ اتَّقَوۡا وَّ الَّذِيۡنَ هُمۡ مُّحۡسِنُوۡنَ ﴿۱۲۸﴾

(16-128) For surely Allah is with those who hold Him in fear and do good. (124)

(124) “Allah is with those who fear Him” because they scrupulously refrain from evil ways and always adopt the righteous attitude, for they know that their actions and deeds are not determined by the evils others do to them but by their own sense of righteousness; so they return good for evil.